# The COMMUNIST

VOL. VII JUNE, 1928 NO. 6

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A Program of Action for America *John Pepper*
Six Years *Herbert Zam*
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# THE COMMUNIST

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BERTRAM D. WOLFE, *Editor*

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MURDER IN THE COAL FIELDS

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# The Mining Crisis Deepens

*By* WM. Z. FOSTER

THE situation of the United Mine Workers of America has become considerably more difficult in the past few weeks. The organization, violently attacked by the coal operators and betrayed by its official leaders, drifts constantly into a more critical position. The long years of misleadership by the Lewis regime, which have undermined the whole union, are now coming to a head in the present life and death crisis of the organization.

## FAILURE TO SPREAD THE STRIKE

It was a criminally wrong policy of Lewis' ever to have allowed the attack of the employers to become centered upon the key Pennsylvania and Ohio districts. Lewis isolated the workers in these districts from the main mass of miners and thus enabled the employers to concentrate their assault upon them. His splitting away of the anthracite miners from those in the bituminous fields; his failure to draw the unorganized masses into the struggle; his signing of separate settlements in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, etc., were crimes against the miners which divided them against themselves and made impossible any real fight against the coal operators.

The disastrous effects of this policy, manifest from the beginning to all clear-thinking workers, grew glaringly evident as the months rolled by. Two things became very clear: the first was that the attack in the Pittsburgh and Ohio districts is a menacing attempt to wipe out the union, and the second was that the only way this historically important strike could be won was by drawing into the struggle the masses of organized and unorganized miners and by rallying the great ranks of the working class in militant support behind the miners.

The strategic time to correct Lewis' fatally wrong policy of splitting the miners and narrowing down the strike, was in April of this year. With the treacherous separate agreements expiring in Illinois and the other signed up bituminous states, and with a rising wave of strike sentiment spreading among the unorganized masses, a splendid opportunity developed for broadening out the strike, for intensifying and politicalizing it in the way necessary for it to be



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carried to victory. The Save-the-Union movement saw this opportunity and with basically correct strategy, undertook to develop in the face of Lewis' opposition, a national strike of miners, by calling out the unorganized; by holding out Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, etc.; and by gradually mobilizing the anthracite miners for the strike.

The Lewis machine, true to its record of treachery and registering its infamy with one more disastrous betrayal of the miners, set itself like flint against this whole broadening-out strategy. In the proposed strike of the unorganized in Western Pennsylvania, it not only did not assist with the resources of the union, but used all its forces to sabotage the strike. Lewis' organizers were scattered all through the unorganized districts, working hand in hand with the employers and the state to prevent the development of the strike. Added to this treachery were the effects of the heavy, persistent unemployment and the recollections of Lewis' betrayal in 1922 and the fear of new betrayals by Lewis. Consequently, the Save-the-Union committee, with its limited resources, was not able to overcome these obstacles and to pull out the great masses of miners. Nevertheless approximately 20,000 struck, instead of the 75,000 required to make the strike really effective.

In Illinois, Lewis, in active collaboration with the coal operators, sabotaged all efforts to broaden out and consolidate the strike. They signed individual agreements with various coal operators, notably the notorious Peabody Coal Company which has long controlled the Illinois miners union. These agreements, the most shameful in the history of the U. M. W. of A., are a plain betrayal of the bituminous strike and a conspiracy of the labor leaders and the operators against the Save-the-Union movement. They are the forerunners of the open shop in Illinois. They cover only a minority of the miners in District 12 and they bind the employers to nothing, leaving them free to liquidate the Jacksonville agreement if the present strike is lost. Betrayed by their leaders, impoverished by long unemployment, and terrorized by the employers, the Illinois miners in many instances were forced back to work under these separate agreements. A serious blow was struck at the whole program of extending the strike, and thereby at the very life of the union.

## DISINTEGRATING TENDENCIES

Other disintegrating tendencies, the fruits of Lewis' criminal policies, are now observable in various sections of the coal industry. Among these are various organized back-to-work movements by Lewis officials in collaboration with the employers. The first of

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these to definitely develop was in Missouri, when what is in reality a company union was built up and an agreement reached with a section of the coal operators on the basis of the 1917 scale. Next, in Northern Illinois, a group of several local unions signed for the 1917 wage rate. More significant yet, a Local in West Frankfort, Ill., has just broken with the District and signed an indenpendent agreement. And now in Eastern Ohio, Daugherty, formerly a sub-district president and long a Lewis henchman, is going about holding mass meetings and openly advocating the formation of an independent union and the liquidation of the Jacksonville scale. In Districts 2 and 5, agents of the employers are at work with similar programs, seeking to undermine the morale of the strikers. Although the miners on strike, desperately in need of relief, are displaying unparalleled tenacity, only an exceedingly few breaking ranks, the danger of such back-to-work movements becomes constantly greater. The whole policy of Lewis intensifies, not liquidates, these strike-breaking manoeuvers. He will gladly organize a national back-to-work movement on a wage-cut basis if it can be done. Against the strike-breaking tendencies the opposition must of course fight resolutely. It must struggle against the Company Union back-to-work tendency and against Lewis' separate agreements. It must demand a general settlement on the basis of the Jacksonville scale. Lewis henchmen for weeks systematically spread the most fantastic hopes among the miners that the Senate Investigation would lead to a settlement of the strike. Now, with the investigation manifestly impotent and degenerated into an endless talkfest, these hopes are being liquidated, with a consequent spread of pessimism.

In the anthracite districts, the disintegrating effects of Lewis' policy manifest themselves by a movement, already widespread in the bureaucracy, for the establishment of a separate union of anthracite workers. Many fake oppositionists also support this disruptive and reactionary tendency. The Lewis machine is now spreading illusions that the recent freight rate cut by the N. Y. Central and Pennsylvania Railroads, by removing the rate discriminating against the Union fields, automatically brings about a settlement; but in the unlikely event of such a settlement, it would be a fake, a makeshift to rid the Republican Party of the inconvenience of the strike and a screen behind which the operators would continue their war of union extermination.

Lewis, instead of meeting the Save-the-Union criticisms and opposition by developing a real fighting policy, of course flies further to the right, into the arms of the employers. His answer

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to criticism is wholesale expulsion of Save-the-Union leaders and locals, the latest mass expulsion being that of 17 local unions in Eastern Ohio. The disruptive effect of such a course needs no elaboration here. It shows that Lewis will unhesitatingly split the union in his fight to eliminate all that is alive and progressive.

The employers are quick to take advantage of the crisis of the union, to profit from Lewis' failure to develop a real mobilization of the miners. Open-shop sentiment is spreading among them. This is exemplified by the fact that whereas several months ago the union readily secured district settlements in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, etc., it now can get settlements only with individual operators, and these settlements are far weaker and more flimsy. More and more the employers are demanding the unconditional surrender of the miners.

## RANK AND FILE VERSUS BUREAUCRATS

Lewis' policies are leading the U. M. W. of A. straight to destruction. Events of the past few weeks have made this increasingly evident. Only a thoroughly aroused rank and file can save and rebuild the organization among the miners. This can be done only by breaking the power of the corrupt Lewis machine. To do this is the present task of the Save-the-Union movement.

A decisive clash between the Lewis machine and the Save-the-Union forces now rapidly approaches. The rank and file miners in the Save-the-Union movement, who undoubtedly represent the sentiment of the great mass of organized miners, have demanded that district conventions be held. Lewis has replied by wholesale expulsions. Now the miners are calling conventions themselves in the various mining districts to meet the crisis, to oust the Lewis machine, and to take control of the organization. These conventions are but the first steps in the development of a militant policy to collect strike relief, to win the strike, to organize the great masses of unorganized, to regain the conditions and standards lost under the Lewis regime, and to gradually rebuild the organization.

The Lewis machine, backed by the employers and the state, will do and is doing all possible to block this historic rank and file movement. No method will be too violent or too contemptible for them to use. They will surely split the Uion rather than give up their hold on it. But all their terrorism and treachery will not stop the forward march of the miners. Lewisism among the miners will fight and struggle bitterly to maintain itself. But its days are numbered. The miners are on the road to freeing themselves of this whole system of treacherous leaders—of organized official subservience to the employers.

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# A Program of Action for America

*By* JOHN PEPPER

ONE of the most urgent and most important tasks facing our Party is the framing of a Program of Action.

A new situation confronts us. Complicated and new tasks arise from it. A clear and definite orientation of our work is imperative.

The following main features and factors of the situation compel us to take up immediately the question of drafting a program of action:

1. The general trustification of production and distribution; the unheard-of speed of rationalization of industry.
2. The growing economic depression. Widespread unemployment, which has begun to take on a permanent character and which tends to become "disemployment."
3. The deep, growing crisis in the labor movement.
4. The militant defensive struggles of certain categories of the working class (miners, textile workers, needle trades) against the capitalist offensive.
5. The year of 1928 is an election year. The Communist Party will put forward its presidential and congressional candidates under its own banner, and it should have an election platform which furnishes a program to the working class and focuses the attention of the masses on the Party.
6. The Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, which will convene the first of July, has as one of the most important items on its agenda the program of the Communist International.

The American Party has the duty to face those problems which arise from the present situation, to clarify the questions of a program and a program of action, to stress those immediate demands which will be able to mobilize and organize the working class against the offensive of the bosses, to link them up into a system of transitional and partial demands, to connect them with our Communist principles, with our final goal—in other words, to frame a Program of Action.



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1. *The Difference between a Program and a Program of Action*

The Party has made several attempts to draft a Program of Action. Usually the presidential and congressional elections served as occasions for tackling this problem. In 1922, 1924, and in 1926 the Workers (Communist) Party of America issued its election platforms. In 1924 the Party drew up besides its election platform a special Program of Action: "*Our Immediate Work.*" All these platforms and programs of action show many shortcomings, uncertainties in the analysis of the situation, and all of them suffer from the fundamental error of confusing the tasks of a basic program with the requirements of a program of action.

PROGRAM AND PROGRAM OF ACTION

What is the difference between a program and a program of action? The program of the Communist Party is the sum total of all those aims for which the Party as the representative of the working class struggles, expressing the interests of that class. A program is for a whole epoch, for the world historic era of imperialism. A program of action does not give the basic analysis of capitalism and imperialism. It is made only for a certain situation, and it analyzes only certain aspects of that situation. The program of the Communist Party must embrace the whole development of society from capitalism to Communism. It must contain the general outline of the transition from the old society to the new one. A program must hold good for the whole span from the conception of the Party to the conquest of power by the working class. A program of action holds good for only a limited, shorter period.

A program contains our principles and only certain basic immediate demands. A program of action contains only certain demands, certain slogans. A program is our general guide. A program of action guides us only in carrying out certain special actions. A program is permanent. If it is good—Marxian, Leninist, scientific—it is not necessary to abandon it. A program of action is very temporary. If it is good for a certain period, it may not and even cannot be good for another period. It will very often be necessary to abandon it and substitute another program of action.

A program contains our whole analysis of capitalism and imperialism, gives our final aims, outlines the whole transition period, maps out the whole road from the beginning to the end of the Revolution. A program of action has much more modest aims:

1. It gives only the analysis of a given concrete situation.
2. It embraces only a system of transitional and partial demands.
3. It puts forward those slogans which are apt to mobilize the masses immediately.

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4. It contains such demands as constitute certain steps forward on the road to the emancipation of the working class from capitalist exploitation.

A program of action sums up the tactical tasks of the Party in a given concrete situation. It is not a program; it is only a platform.

### 2. *A Minimum Program and a Maximum Program*

Shall our Program of Action be a minimum program? The Second International had a minimum program and a maximum program. The minimum program contained such demands as aimed to improve the conditions of the workers within the framework of capitalist society. Its maximum program contained the final goal, the establishment of Socialism. The Social Democrats never linked up, either in their programs or in their actions, the demands of their minimum with the aims of their maximum program. Adapting themselves to the prevailing conditions of capitalism, they maintained the goal of Socialism as some misty dream; while in reality they restricted their whole activity to a struggle for those demands which might bring about some slight improvement in the conditions of the working class but which could not overthrow capitalism.

Our Program of Action must by no means be identical with the minimum program of the Social Democrats. The Third World Congress of the Communist International defined precisely and with unmistakable sharpness the Communist position on this question:

> "In this struggle the Communist Parties do not put forward any minimum program which would within the framework of capitalism improve capitalism's tottering structure. The destruction of capitalism is now as before the principal task of the Communists. But in order to fulfill this task the Communist Parties must advance demands which satisfy the urgent claims of the working class. The Communists must carry through these demands by mass struggle, irrespective of whether they are compatible with the existence of the capitalist order of society or not. . . Instead of the minimum program of the Centrists and reformists, the Communist International proposes the struggle for the practical needs of the proletariat, for a system of demands which in their totality destroy the power of the bourgeoisie, organize the proletariat, and state the stages in the struggle of the proletariat for a dictatorship."

Our Program of Action must not be a minimum program in the spirit of the Second International or of the present-day Socialist parties. It must be a revolutionary platform, setting forth a system

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of demands regardless of whether or not they are realizable within the framework of capitalism.

In selecting our demands our criteria should only be the following:

1. The interests of the working class.
2. The fitness of the slogans to mobilize the masses.
3. If not each demand, the sum total or system of these demands must constitute a definite step forward toward our revolutionary goal, toward the overthrow of capitalism.

### 3. *The Question of General Demands*

A program of action should not contain only isolated demands—transitional and partial. It is also necessary to have such general slogans, general demands, as tend to link up all these slogans and demands into a system. At present in America the following central or general slogans could fulfill the function of such a linking-up.

1. Class struggle vs. class collaboration. Relentless fight against trustified capital. Active resistance to the effects of rationalization on the workers. Struggle against the offensive of the bosses.
2. Save the trade unions from the onslaught of the bosses and from the treachery of the misleaders of labor.
3. Struggle against imperialist war and war danger.
4. Independent political action of the working class. For a Labor Party.

Why these central slogans? The following basic features of the conditions of our present struggle call for them:

1. The whole labor movement is poisoned with class collaboration.
2. The Socialist Party has dropped the issue of class struggle from its constitution.
3. There is no political mass party of the working class in this country. The workers still adhere to the old capitalist parties. The whole A. F. of L. and the leadership of the Socialist Party are against a Labor Party.
4. The A. F. of L. and the labor aristocracy which dominates the whole labor movement today is sabotaging the fundamental problem of the working class: the organization of the unorganized.
5. The A. F. of L. identifies itself with imperialism and puts forward the theory of the "Monroe Doctrine" of labor. The Socialist Party is an advocate of the League of Nations.

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Central, general slogans are necessary. But it would be a mistake to think that it is possible to concentrate the struggle of the working class in the present situation, in the period of imperialism, on one or even on a few central slogans. Situations change so quickly today. Life presents such manifold problems. The aspect of the class struggle varies so constantly that to concentrate only on a few demands would narrow down the whole struggle of the working class.

### 4. *Principles and Immediate Demands*

There are still certain notions in the ranks of our Party against immediate, partial, and transitional demands. Some comrades still think that the setting up of partial demands beclouds the issue of our final goal: the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the establishment of a Communist society. Some people ask: Is the Communist Party the party of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat or the party of partial demands? The question can not be put in that way. The correct Leninist formulation reads: The Communist Party is the party of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and just because it is, it puts forward, in order to mobilize the masses, partial demands which it links up with its revolutionary aims. The difference between the Communists and the reformists is not the question of the putting up or not of partial demands. The real difference is first that the reformists want to substitute partial demands for the revolutionary goal, and second that the reformists do not carry out any sincere struggle even for partial demands.

The big program discussion of the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International settled the relation between our principles and partial demands for the program of the Communist parties. The World Congress laid down the following line on the relation between principles and immediate demands:

1. The general program of the Communist International must give the theoretical basis for all transitional and partial demands.
2. The programs of the national sections of the Comintern must clearly and definitely lay down the necessity of partial demands.
3. The partial demands must be linked up with our general goal.
4. The program must make reservations in regard to the dependence of partial demands on the actual, concrete circumstances of the time and place.
5. In the general program of the Comintern it is necessary to give the basic historic types of the transitional demands of the national sections according to the fundamental differences

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in the economic and political structure of the various countries.

6. The Congress condemned decisively the tendency which sees opportunism in the inclusion of transitional demands in the program, just as it condemned all attempts to substitute partial demands for the fundamental revolutionary tasks.

## DEFECTS IN OUR FORMER PLATFORM

The various programs and platforms of the American Party suffer from the lack of immediate demands. The original program of the Workers Party, which was written in 1921 and revised in 1923, does not contain any major mistakes in regard to basic Communist principles, but it does not include any immediate demands and does not even lay the basis for any immediate demands. The 1924 election platform not only contains opportunistic general demands but even forgets to put up any concrete demands at all. The Program of Action "*Our Immediate Work*," enumerates a whole series of tasks for the Party, such as the election campaign, membership drive, educational work, trade union work, shop nuclei, and unemployment, but it stops at party organizational measures and does not contain any demands for the workers. The only issue on which it puts forward concrete demands in the interest of the working class is the problem of unemployment, but its slogans on unemployment contain major, opportunistic mistakes (such as immediate nationalization of industry without a workers' government, control of production without a revolutionary situation, etc.), and among other things it forgets to mention the slogan of shorter hours.

The 1922 election platform likewise forgets the basic demand of a shorter working day.

These shortcomings of our past programs of action and election platforms show that there are still alive remnants of the old Socialist Labor Party sectarian traditions in our ranks. The biggest obstacle in the progress of our Party is the narrow-minded attitude towards immediate demands, such as was expressed in the whole teaching of Daniel DeLeon. In one of his articles: "*Demands, 'Immediate' and 'Constant'*" he went so far as to write:

> "Shorter hours — ten instead of twelve, or eight instead of ten — when really and ultimately the hours will be nearer to three than to eight; higher wages, which means less exploitation, when really and ultimately wageism is to be abolished; a minimum of sanitary ventilation in factories, when really and ultimately the factory is to cease being a hole and is to become a parlor; these and the like are not 'demands'; they are intermediary stepping-stones to be dis-

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carded as soon as possible in the onward march. They have no place in the platform.

"The 'demand' is ONE—it is the proclamation of the goal. The so-called 'immediate' demands are legion. The specification of them, or of any of them, is superfluous.

"A political party that sets up 'immediate' demands by so much blurs its 'constant' demand, or goal. The presence of 'immediate' demands in a Socialist platform reveals pure and simple politicianism—corruption or the invitation to corruption."

The presence of immediate demands in a Communist platform is, of course, not "pure and simple politicianism." The lack of immediate demands is pure and simple sectarianism.

5. *Immediate Nationalization and Control of Production*

There are certain typical mistakes in the various programs of action and election platforms of our Party. The most important of these mistakes is the attitude towards the problems of nationalization of industry and control of production. Our past platforms many times took a stand which resembled the opportunistic attitude of the Socialists on these issues. The source of these mistakes was confusion as to the function of a program and that of a program of action. The Party in its various platforms, led by the desire to present not only our immediate partial demands but some of the major basic transitional demands leading directly to Socialism, committed almost without fail the same kind of mistakes in its various platforms. The most common type of these mistakes was the putting of demands which could be realized only by a workers' government and after a proletarian revolution, to a capitalist government and within capitalist society. That constitutes a very dangerous mistake, because it is apt to create illusions in the minds of the workers. The most dangerous illusion today is the expectation by the workers that their most important demands can be realized from the capitalist government and within the framework of capitalist society. The fundamental illusion of the American working class in any case is the faith in the miraculous power of the capitalist government and the unlimited possibilities for the working class within the present bourgeois society.

Almost all the platforms of the Workers Party contain these mistakes. The election platform of 1924 calls for the immediate nationalization of all industries and for industrial democracy:

"The Workers Party declares itself in favor of the immediate nationalization of all large-scale industries, such as railroads, mines,

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super-power plants, and means of communication and transportation, and for the organization of the workers in these industries for participation in the management and direction of those industries nationalized, thus developing industrial democracy, until industry comes under the control of those who produce the wealth of the nation, subject only to such general control as will protect the interests of the producers as a whole."

The Program of Action of 1924 *"Our Immediate Work"*, again sets up as "political" demands in connection with unemployment the following points:

"Government operation of non-operating industries and shops. Nationalization of mines, railroads, and public utilities."

The same Program of Action demands on the "industrial" field:

"Establishment of control committees of workers to regulate production and investigate accounts."

The 1926 Program of Action of the Party for the congressional elections repeats the same mistake:

"The workers and farmers must fight for the immediate nationalization of all large-scale industries, including the railroads and super-power projects, and the establishment of the participation of the workers in the management and workers' control. These industries must be operated for service and not for profit."

As the above quotations show, three mistakes repeat themselves very closely linked up in the history of all programs of action of our Party:

1. Immediate nationalization of all industries.
2. Industrial democracy.
3. Control of production.

All three demands were put forward in the various programs of action to the capitalist government and within capitalist society. These fundamental mistakes in our programs of action must be corrected in the next Program of Action of the Workers (Communist) Party, which will serve as the election platform of the Party in the 1928 presidential and congressional elections.

The nationalization of all industries is the first basic step towards Socialism. But it cannot be realized except by a workers' government. A workers' government cannot be established without a proletarian revolution. A workers' government is an empty phrase without the destruction of the State apparatus of the bourgeoisie,

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without the building up of the State apparatus of the working class in the form of Soviets. To call for the nationalization of all industries without linking up this demand with the slogan of a workers' government and the Soviets is mere opportunism. It helps to foster the illusion that certain steps towards the establishment of Socialism can be taken within capitalist society and without a proletarian revolution, without the smashing of the capitalist State, without the establishment of proletarian Soviets.

A capitalist government will never nationalize *all* industries, but there is always the possibility that the capitalist State will take under its control some sections of industry, such as mines or railroads. The nationalization of any industry in the hands of an imperialist government is not in the interests of the working class. Just the opposite. It strengthens immensely trustified capitalism against the struggles of the workers. That is true in general, but it is much more true in America, where trusts are already almighty, the bulk of the workers unorganized, and the organized section of the working class permeated with the ideology of class collaboration and split up into innumerable craft unions.

The slogan for participation of the workers in the management of industry, "*thus developing industrial democracy*," is clearly wrong and opportunistic. Participation by the workers in the management of industry under a capitalist regime is equivalent to sharing the responsibility for capitalist exploitation, for the speed-up, and for the worst methods of forced capitalist rationalization. Any illusion as to the possibility of establishing industrial democracy under capitalism is a dangerous, utopian conception. The slogan for democratization of the trusts leads to class-collaboration, compulsory arbitration, eliminates struggles for higher wages and shorter hours. Any slogan for industrial democracy under capitalism must lead to the enslavement of the workers to "their" bosses, and is equivalent to erecting a new powerful prop for the capitalist dictatorship. Industrial democracy cannot be developed "*until industry comes under the control of those who produce the wealth.*" It can be developed only when industry is already under the control of the working class.

Control of production by the workers under capitalist conditions is nonsensical and opportunistic. The workers cannot control capitalist industry. Workers' control can be established only after the expropriation of the industries and after the nationalization of the means of production. Control of production is a dangerously opportunistic slogan in the present situation. It is a powerful revolutionary slogan in a revolutionary situation and *only* in a

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revolutionary situation, in connection with the slogans of nationalization and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Nationalization of all industries is a mighty revolutionary measure only if it is carried out by a workers' government. Control of production by the workers can not be realized if it is not linked up with nationalization. Control of production under capitalist conditions would give the co-operation of the working class for a better, more orderly, more profit-bringing management of industry. Control of production is one of the most powerful revolutionary measures in a revolutionary situation, after the workers' government is established, after the workers' government has expropriated the capitalists and nationalized the industries in the hands of the proletarian State. These three slogans—Nationalization, Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and Control of Production—*are inseparable, must be linked together in our* propaganda, and must not appear as independent demands.

How dangerous the slogans for immediate nationalization and control of production under capitalist conditions are is best shown by the fact that the advancing of such demands brings us into the most unpleasant opportunistic neighborhood of the Socialist Party. The national platform of the Socialist Party for 1926 says:

> "By intelligent use of the ballot, aided if need be by industrial action, all class divisions and class rule can be abolished; the socially usable industrial wealth can be redeemed from the control of private interests and title and control transferred to the people to be administered for the common good."

The ideal of the Socialist Party is the nationalization of industry as it is realized already by various capitalist governments. The 1926 platform of the Socialist Party states:

> "We favor immediate development and operation by government of the water-power now going to waste. The harnessing of the Canadian side of Niagara Falls by the Ontario government, and consequent furnishing of electric power at a fraction of the price paid in this country, is evidence of what public ownership can do. . .
>
> "We favor nationalization of railways under an administrative board, representative of railway employees and the public. The Canadian government has successfully taken over the Canadian Northern, Grand Trunk and Grand Trunk Pacific Lines, after their financial collapse under private ownership."

The true nature of the slogans of nationalization and control by production under capitalist conditions is shown by these Socialist Party demands. It must be a very remarkable brand of Socialism which can be realized by such an out-and-out capitalist government as the Canadian Government of His British Majesty.

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Today, in the era of imperialism, it is necessary to avoid the use of such demands as would increase the power of the bourgeois State apparatus. The whole development of monopoly and finance capital goes in the direction of a complete merger of trusts and State. Lenin had already analyzed that process which is now going on at a more speedy tempo in many countries, but in no country with such an increased speed as in the United States of America. There is no country for which it would be more correct to say what Bukharin said about these slogans in his report to the Fifteenth Party Convention of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia:

> "Neither nationalization for the capitalist countries, nor municipalization, nor the transfer [of industries] from the hands of private capital to the hands of the State, nor the slogan of workers' control, nor the whole complex of such State capitalistic slogans is acceptable from the point of view of the Comintern. This was the position on this question of the Third Congress of the Comintern, which was conducted under the direct leadership of Lenin."

A negative attitude towards these slogans does not mean, of course, that our Party should take a negative attitude towards social legislation and social insurance or towards the demands for public works as an immediate relief for the unemployed workers. It is necessary, however, to demand guarantees and protection in the interests of the workers. Social insurance should be maintained at the expense of the employers and the State, but it should be administered wholly by the working class. Public works should be conducted strictly under union conditions, hours, and wages, and with all guarantees for labor protection.

### 6. *Some Other Mistakes*

The next Program of Action of our Party must also avoid a whole series of other mistakes which were committed in previous platforms. These mistakes embrace sins of omission and commission. The 1926 platform demanded "*the immediate reduction of the army and navy.*" In other words, it fostered the illusion in the minds of the workers that a smaller army and navy would be less dangerous from the point of view of the inner class struggle or the imperialist war danger. The correct slogan would have been: *Militia of all producers.* The same mistake is repeated in the United States section of the program of the All-America Anti-Imperialist League, which demands: "*The reduction of the United States army and navy.*" The Party platforms of 1922 and 1924 completely ignore the problems of the army and navy.

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The 1926 Program of Action demanded the "*downward revision of the tariff on the necessities used by the workers and farmers*" instead of demanding the complete abolition of the tariff. The same platform gave its endorsement, though qualified, to the McNary-Haugen Bill, which is one of the most dangerous and utopian attempts advanced by capitalists as an alleged "salvation" and quack remedy for the farmers.

The Program of the Anti-Imperialist League, in which Communists participate, issued the slogan of "*internationalization of the Panama Canal and Canal Zone.*" The realization of this demand would mean an agreement between certain Latin-American countries, on the one hand, and the United States of America and Great Britain, and maybe some other imperialist powers, on the other hand. In any such agreement the imperialist powers would have the upper hand. Such a slogan resembles very dangerously the slogan of the Socialist Party in its 1928 election platform for internationalization and democratization of the League of Nations.

The 1922 platform of our Party "*forgot*" to put forward the demand for the complete independence of the American colonies, and restricted itself to the demand for the withdrawal of troops and the end of military dictatorship. Several of the later programs of action of the Party omitted the demand for the completely unrestricted freedom of immigration. The questions of social legislation, the demands for the Negroes, and the problems of prohibition, education, and housing did not play a sufficiently important role in the past programs of action of our Party.

More careful consideration of all demands and theoretical clarity in regard to the problems of our Program of Action are an imperative necessity. Cleanliness in theory is the prerequisite for cleanliness in practice. The example of the Socialist Party, with its fundamentally opportunistic mistakes in all its programs of action, should serve as a warning. The national platform of the Socialist Party for 1926 took up the question of the four million unemployed, not because of the untold suffering of the workers but because it meant a "*waste of man power.*" The same platform is skeptical about the present prohibition enforcement because "*further persistence in this tragic farce threatens a complete break-down of law and order.*" The platform of the Socialist Party for 1928 does not demand the unrestricted freedom of immigration and the repeal of the infamous immigration laws, but it calls only for the "*modification of the immigration laws to permit the re-uniting of families.*" The same platform refuses to recognize the right of the

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American colonies for complete independence, and calls only for "*autonomy*." The sole criticism the Socialist Party has to offer in regard to the present capitalist state in this country is the remark that the Constitution has become obsolete and needs overhauling; therefore, it demands "*a modernized Constitution.*"

### 7. *An Outline for a Program of Action*

A Program of Action in the present situation in connection with the 1928 elections should be called "*THE PLATFORM OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE*" and should deal with the following subjects: (1) An analysis of the basic features of the present situation; thorough-going criticism of the Republican and the Democratic Parties as well as of the Progressives, the Socialist Party and the A. F. of L. Its key-note should be: *Class struggle vs. class collaboration;* (2) unemployment; (3) the offensive of the bosses; (4) the historic struggle of the miners; (5) imperialist war and war danger; (6) the American colonies; (7) defense of the Soviet Union; (8) role of the Government-strike-breaker; (9) exposure of capitalist democracy; (10) the Labor Party; (11) social legislation; (12) taxation; (13) demands of the farmers; (14) demands of the Negroes; (15) demands of the women; (16) demands of the foreign-born; (17) demands of the youth and children; (18) education; (19) prohibition; (20) housing; (21) the role of the Communist Party and the revolutionary struggle for our final goal: The overthrow of capitalism; Workers' and Farmers' Government; Soviets; expropriation of the capitalists; nationalization of industries; workers' control; Communist society.

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# The Youth Movement and the Sixth Anniversary of the Young Workers (Communist) League

*By* HERBERT ZAM

ON THE occasion of its Sixth Anniversary, the Young Workers (Communist) League finds itself in the process of laying the basis for leadership of the young workers in all their struggles. Though still small in size, and of limited influence, the Young workers (Communist) League, in the recent past, has established itself not only in the eyes of its friends, but also in the eyes of its enemies, as the only youth organization in the ranks of the working class that is worthy of notice. Ever larger numbers of young workers are beginning to look upon the League as their leader, and the League, in turn, is beginning to adopt activities and methods of work that will fit it for leadership. The Young Workers (Communist) League of America is not yet the mass Communist youth organization. It is the basis for and the kernel around which will develop the American Communist youth movement leading the majority of the exploited youth of the country.

Formally, the Young Workers League was founded in May, 1922, at a convention in New York City. But its origin dates back to the days before the war, to the Young Peoples Socialist League. Great as is the difference between the two organizations, the present Communist youth League of America has its roots in Y. P. S. L.

The Young Peoples Socialist League was never a mass organization. It never attained a large size. Its influence was very limited. It participated in no struggles of the young workers. It was at best, a social-educational organization. The membership came largely from the ranks of the students and clerical workers. It had little or no contact with the young workers in the important industries.

## NARROW BASIS FOR YOUTH MOVEMENT

There were two reasons for this. Fundamental of course, is the narrow objective basis for a revolutionary youth movement at the time of the Y. P. S. L.; but a secondary reason, not to be overlooked, was the lack of understanding as to the role of the youth movement,



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which resulted in a wrong orientation and the failure to take advantage even of whatever favorable circumstances did exist.

The mode of development of American industry was in many ways basically different from the development in Europe. The bulk of the workers were drawn from other countries. The adoption of the latest methods of production was rapid. The development of machinery and large scale industry proceeded at a phenomenal rate. These developments largely caused skill to be discarded. Apprenticeship as a means of training skilled workers became a negligible factor. The main channel for the entry of the youth into industry was as unskilled laborers. Apprenticeship dramatizes the existence of the problem of the youth in industry by demonstrating the special position and needs of the young worker. The absence of apprenticeship tended to conceal the problem of the youth in industry.

While, of course, there were many young workers in industry, their numbers were not so large as might be imagined. The young workers formed only a secondary supply of labor, after the immigrants. Consequently, the small proportion of young workers, the absence of a dramatizing factor, served to relegate the youth problem in the ranks of the working class to the background. The same factor which kept the proportion of young workers in industry small, tended to make the proportion of young people in non-industrial occupations—clerical, agricultural—large, so that the main orientation of the young people before the war was not toward entering industry as workers, and becoming members of the working class, but toward entering the so-called "white collar" occupations with hopes of rising above the working class. The illusions created by the opening of the West and the constant expansion of industry contributed to this state of mind.

The United States underwent a very rapid development—but this development was essentially within its own borders, consequently not necessitating large military forces. That is how the myth of the "peacefulness" of the United States originated. The Y. P. S. L. in the United States did not even speak of the anti-militarist struggle, which in Europe was one of the cornerstones of the Socialist youth movement.

Thus, while in Europe, Socialist youth leagues developed through the struggle of the apprentices for better economic conditions (Germany) through the fight of the youth against militarism (Belgium) and also to a certain extent against the growing reformism in the ranks of the Socialist movement, in the United States the Young Peoples Socialist League was born through force of imitation of

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the European movement and from the need of the Socialist Party for a "water boy" in its various activities. In Europe, by 1900, there were already fairly well-established Leagues. In the United States there was not even one group.

What was the pressing issue that compelled the Y. P. S. L. after seven years of peaceful slumber to hold a convention in 1912? Did it feel the necessity of examining the position of the American youth and adopting measures to improve them? Was it because the Socialist youth movement had suddenly awakened to a consciousness of its role? No! The convention was based on the general crisis in the Socialist movement and the necessity of the Y. P. S. L. adopting an attitude toward this crisis. The convention itself did not understand what had been the driving force that brought it into existence. It passed a few superficial resolutions, "greeted" the proletarian revolutions in Russia and Hungary, and went home.

It failed miserably to show the path that the Socialist youth movement was to follow.

## TOWARDS A MASS LEAGUE

While at the present time, the path followed by the Young Workers (Communist) League forms a sharp angle to that followed by the Y. P. S. L. before the war, the turn was not made without painful transitions. There is no political continuity between the pre-war and the present youth movement. In Europe, the Communist Youth Leagues are the bearers of the revolutionary tradition of the pre-war Socialist Youth Leagues. In America, there were no revolutionary traditions to be inherited. Only in 1917 was a shred of revolutionary activity evident in the beginning of anti-war work. The Youth movement went through the stages of underground sect, educational groups, Communist propaganda circles and finally genuine Communist Youth League in bewilderingly rapid succession. These necessary changes were many times so abrupt as to leave large sections of the organization outside its ranks.

One feature is outstanding in and runs through all these stages. The movement had no definite idea of its goal. As late as the middle of 1919, when the Left Wing had already largely won the bulk of the Socialists in the country to the ideas of the Russian Revolution, and was very rapidly generating organizational power for the establishment of the Communist movement, the Secretary of the Y. P. S. L. still wrote that the youth movement was purely educational in character and must have nothing to do with politics. This conception lasted for a long time, through the Independent Y. P. S. L. and into the Young Workers League.

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The split with Socialism was not based on youth issues, not even on concrete American issues, but on the general, international issue, and at the beginning, we had the spectacle of two youth leagues, one Communist and the other Socialist, carrying on practically the same activity and differing only in allegiance to a political party. Their differences were the differences between the two adult Parties.

The first convention of the Young Workers League, held in New York, May, 1922, after many vicissitudes for the youth movement, was not really a founding convention. It did not adopt a youth program, it did not lay the basis for the organizational consolidation of the revolutionary youth movement. But it was of tremendous significance, nevertheless. It definitely established, even though in an unclear way, the political unity of the working class, with the Communist Party as its leader. It killed the theory of independence which in America was a danger that could not be overlooked, in view of the large student element within the League. It was only at the second convention that the League really first got a hold on itself, when a youth program was adopted. This was the first time in the history of the American youth movement that a youth organization had a youth program!

## Y. C. I. LEADS

Did all these developments take place as a result of the inherent power of the youth movement? Hardly.

There is no doubt that if the youth movement had depended upon its own powers, it would either have degenerated in the direction of social democracy, or disintegrated altogether. At every critical point, it was the influence, experience and assistance of the international revolutionary youth movement, organized in the Communist Youth International that was the deciding factor in pushing the American youth movement along the right road. It was the prestige of the Communist Youth International that made it possible to gather the best elements from the Y. P. S. L. into the Young Workers League. It was the pressure of the Communist Youth International that caused the adoption of a youth program at the Second convention in 1923, and it was the Communist Youth International that showed the League the path toward the young workers through the application of this youth program to the concrete American conditions. The resolution adopted at the February, 1926 plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International is certainly the most important document so far in the history of the League. It opened up new vistas for the revolutionary

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youth movement, which have not been completely explored to this very day. The resolution served to crystallize the sentiment that had developed within the ranks of the League for mass activity, and gave that sentiment a definite channel of expression.

The Fourth National Convention of the League held in New York, November, 1927, was undoubtedly the best in the history of the youth movement. This convention undertook the most thorough analysis of the position of the young workers and the factors affecting them. The stimulus from this convention very definitely resulted in throwing the League into mass activity and bringing it up sharply against the new conditions facing the young workers.

What are these changes we have spoken about? They began largely as a result of the war. During the war itself, youth became a factor in industry as a result of the conscription of the older people. The end of the war brought about restriction in immigration, cutting off the main supply of labor for American industries. The youth had to fill this need. The industrialization of the South, the rationalization process which assumed such a rapid tempo after the war, the agrarian crisis but strengthened this general tendency.

From a "peaceful" country, the United States has become one of the most militaristic. The militarization of the youth is proceeding at a rapid pace, both through the usual military form as well as through "special American methods," C. M. T. C., R. O. T. C., etc. The young workers are already feeling the pressure of this militarization process.

We can sum up as follows: Before the war, the young workers formed a small proportion and were not crystallized from the general mass of the non-industrial youth. Today, the proportion of young workers is rapidly growing and the process of crystallization is already fairly well advanced.

In the general development of the League, the Party has played a considerable role. However, this has not been through conscious and direct efforts to guide the League as a youth organization, but as a result of the general political development of the Party itself. The various stages that the Party went through were reflected in one form or another in the League—underground sectarianism—isolation—etc. The breaking of the Party from these various negative features inevitably resulted in similar corrections in the work of the League. However, just as the League did not understand at the beginning that the Party is the political leader of the entire working class, including the young workers, so the Party did not understand that the Party was also the leader of the young workers

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as a section of the working class, of the League as the organization of the working youth, and must build the League as a means of winning the working youth for the class-struggle, at the same time helping the League adopt correct policies, not only in its relation to the Party, but also toward the broad masses of the young workers. Naturally, with a historical background such as has been described here, it was very easy to underestimate the importance of the young workers in the class struggle, and the role of the League in the revolutionary movement.

The League has made tremendous progress in the last six months or so. In fact, it is recognized that at no time in its history has it developed at so rapid a pace, not merely from the viewpoint of organizational strength, securing new members, etc., which is very important, but particularly in its orientation toward the basic struggles taking place, and in its correct analysis regarding the perspective for future activity.

It can safely be said that the League in America is finally on the road to a mass League. If the League will keep its ear to the ground, react properly to changes, participate actively in struggles, develop its initiative, avoid internal differences; and if it will secure the proper kind of support from the Party and the Left Wing, it will emerge from the struggles as the real leader of the American young workers in the fight against the capitalist system.

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# The Labor Movement in America

*By* FREDERICK ENGELS

[*The Communist* offers its readers herewith the complete text of a pamphlet by Frederick Engels published in the United States in 1887 and out of print since the early 90's. The pamphlet is a reprint of the introduction to the American edition of Engels' book, "The Condition of the Working Class in England," as translated into English by Florence Kelley Wischnewetzky and published in New York in 1886. The complete title of the pamphlet read: The Labor Movement in America (The George Movement—The Knights of Labor—The Socialists) By Frederick Engels. (Price: 1 cent) New York. Printed and sold by Louis Weiss, 64 and 66 Ann Street, 1887.

For further information on this pamphlet, its origin and import, see the article entitled "Engels on the American Labor Movement" by A. Landy, published in our May issue. We are indebted to A. Landy for the securing of the text of this pamphlet and the notes and explanations herewith offered.—*Editor.*]

TEN months have elapsed since, at the translator's wish, I wrote the Appendix to this book; and during these ten months, a revolution has been accomplished in American society such as, in any other country, would have taken at least ten years.[1] In February, 1885, American public opinion was almost unanimous on this one point: that there was no working class, in the European sense of the word, in America; that consequently no class-struggle between workmen and capitalists, such as tore European society to pieces, was possible in the American Republic[2]; and that, therefore, Social-

1. Compare Engels' letters to Mrs. Wischnewetzky. Both Marx and Engels were convinced that the Americans were an energetic, go-ahead people, capable of moving by leaps and bounds as compared with the much slower pace of Europeans.

2. Compare Engels' letter to Mrs. Wischnewetzky, dated June 3d, 1886, in which he states: " . . . One thing is certain: the American working class is moving and no mistake. And after a few false starts, they will get into the right track soon enough. This appearance of the Americans upon the scene I consider one of the greatest events of the year.

"What the downbreak of Russian Czarism would be for the great military monarchies of Europe—the snapping of their mainstay—that is for the bourgeois of the whole world the breaking-out of class-war in America. For America after all was the ideal of all bourgeois: a country rich, vast, expanding, with purely



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ism was a thing of foreign importation which could never take root in American soil. And yet, at that moment, the coming class-struggle was casting its gigantic shadow before it in the strikes of the Pennsylvania coal miners and of many other trades,[3] and especially in the preparations all over the country, for the great eight hours' movement which was to come off in the May following.[4] That I then duly appreciated these symptoms, that I anticipated a working-class movement on a national scale, my "Appendix" shows; but no one could then foresee that in such a short time the movement would burst out with such irresistible force, would spread with the rapidity of a prairie-fire, would shake American society to its very foundations.

The fact is there, stubborn and indisputable. To what extent it had struck terror to the American ruling classes was revealed to me in an amusing way, by American journalists who did me the honor of calling on me last summer; the "new departure" had put them into a state of helpless fright and perplexity. But at that time the movement was only just on the start; there was but a series of confused and apparently disconnected upheavals of that class which, by the suppression of Negro slavery and the rapid development of manufactures, had become the lowest stratum of American society. Before the year closed, these bewildering social convulsions began to take a definite direction. The spontaneous, instinctive movements of these vast masses of working people, over a vast extent of

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bourgeois institutions unleavened by feudal remnants or monarchical traditions and without a permanent and hereditary proletariat. Here every one could become, if not a capitalist, at all events an independent man, producing or trading, with his own means, for his own account. And because there were not, as *yet*, classes with opposing interests, our—and your—bourgeois thought that America stood *above* class antagonism and struggles. That delusion has now broken down, the last Bourgeois-Paradise on earth is fast changing into a Purgatorio, and can only be prevented from becoming like Europe an Inferno by the go-ahead pace at which the development of the newly fledged proletariat of America will take place. The way in which they have made their appearance on the scene, is quite extraordinary—six months ago nobody suspected anything and now they appear all of a sudden in such organized masses as to strike terror into the whole capitalist class. I only wish Marx could have lived to see it!—" Cf. also. Engels to Mrs. Wishchnewetzky. January 7, 1886.

3. In 1884, 485 strikes occurred; in 1885, 695; 1886, 1572; 1887, 1505; but in 1888, there were only 946.

4. The struggle for the eight-hour day is an old chapter in labor history; but with the Knights of Labor and the vast fermentation which dominated the American labor movement in 1886, the impression had become general "that the first of May, 1886, had been fixed upon as the day of the millennial dawn of the eight-hour heaven on earth." (A. M. Simons: Social Forces in American History. New York, 1926. p. 315. Such phrasing in reference to a movement of political scope and intensity which characterized the entire movement of 1886 and 87 betrays little of a Marxist calibre.)

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country, the simultaneous outburst of their common discontent with a miserable social condition, the same everywhere and due to the same causes, made them conscious of the fact that they formed a new and distinct class of American society; a class of, practically speaking, more or less hereditary wage-workers,—proletarians. And with true American instinct this consciousness led them at once to take the next step towards their deliverance: the formation of a political workingman's party, with a platform of its own, and with the conquest of the Capitol and the White House for its goal; in May the struggle for the eight hours' working-day, the troubles in Chicago, Milwaukee, etc., the attempts of the ruling class to crush the nascent uprising of Labor by brute force and brutal class-justice; in November the new Labor Party organized in all great centres, and the New York, Chicago and Milwaukee elections. May and November have hitherto reminded the American bourgeoisie only of the payment of coupons of U. S. bonds; henceforth May and November will remind them, too, of the dates on which the American working class presented *their* coupons for payment.

In European countries, it took the working class years and years before they fully realized the fact that they formed a distinct and, under the existing social conditions, a permanent class of modern society; and it took years again until this class-consciousness led them to form themselves into a distinct political party, independent of and opposed to all the old political parties formed by the various sections of the ruling classes. On the more favored soil of America, where no medieval ruins bar the way, where history begins with the elements of modern bourgeois society as evolved in the seventeenth century, the working class passed through these two stages of its development within ten months.

Still, all this is but a beginning. That the laboring classes should feel their community of grievances and of interests, their solidarity as a class in opposition to all other classes; that in order to give expression and effect to this feeling, they should set in motion the political machinery provided for that purpose in every free country —that is the first step only. The next step is to find the common remedy for these common grievances, and to embody it in the platform of the new Labor Party. And this—the most important and the most difficult step in the movement—has yet to be taken in America.

A new party must have a distinct positive platform; a platform which may vary in details as circumstances vary and as the party itself develops but still one upon which the party, for the time being, is agreed. So long as such a platform has not been worked

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out, or exists but in a rudimentary form, so long the new party, too, will have but a rudimentary existence; it may exist locally, but not yet nationally; it will be a party potentially but not actually.

That platform, whatever may be its first initial shape, must develop in a direction which may be determined beforehand. The causes that brought into existence the abyss between the working class and the capitalist class are the same in America as in Europe; the means of filling up that abyss, are equally the same everywhere. Consequently, the platform of the American proletariat will in the long run coincide as to the ultimate end to be attained, with the one which, after sixty years of dissensions and discussions, has become the adopted platform of the great mass of the European militant proletariat. It will proclaim, as the ultimate end, the conquest of political supremacy by the working class, in order to effect the direct appropriation of all means of production—land, railways, mines, machinery, etc.—by society at large to be worked in common by all for the account and benefit of all.

But if the new American party, like all political parties everywhere, by the very fact of its formation aspires to the conquest of political power, it is as yet far from agreed upon what to do with that power when once attained. In New York and the other great cities of the East, the organization of the working class has proceeded upon the lines of Trades' Societies, forming in each city a powerful Central Labor Union. In New York the Central Labor Union, last November, chose for its standard bearer Henry George, and consequently its temporary electoral platform has been largely imbued with his principles. In the great cities of the Northwest the electoral battle was fought upon a rather indefinite labor platform, and the influence of Henry George's theories was scarcely, if at all, visible. And while in these great centres of population and of industry the new class movement came to a political head, we find all over the country two widespread labor organizations: the "Knights of Labor" and the "Socialist Labor Party," of which only the latter has a platform in harmony with the modern European standpoint as summarized above.

Of the three more or less definite forms under which the American labor movement thus presents itself, the first, the Henry George movement in New York,[5] is for the moment of a chiefly local sig-

5. For the George Movement cf. Mary Beard, "A Short History of the American Labor Movement." Engels' criticism of Henry George is in part already contained in one of Marx's letters to Sorge, an English translation of which I published in the Workers Monthly, and which Engels called a masterpiece of succinct criticism. This is not the place to take up Marx-Engels written references to Henry George in their entirety; perhaps there may be occasion for it in the future.

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nificance. No doubt New York is by far the most important city of the state; but New York is not Paris[6] and the United States is not France. And it seems to me that the Henry George platform, in its present shape, is too narrow to form the basis for anything but a local movement, or at best for a short-lived phase of the general movement. To Henry George, the expropriation of the mass of the people from the land is the great and universal cause of the splitting up of the people into rich and poor. Now this is not correct historically. In Asiatic and classical antiquity, the predominant form of class-oppression was slavery; that is to say, not so much the expropriation of the masses from the land as the appropriation of their persons. When, in the decline of the Roman Republic, the free Italian peasants were expropriated from their farms, they formed a class of "poor whites" similar to that of the Southern slave states before 1861; and between slaves and poor whites, two classes equally unfit for self-emancipation, the old world went to pieces. In the middle ages, it was not the expropriation of the people *from* but on the contrary, their appropriation *to* the land which became the source of feudal oppression. The peasant retained his land but was attached to it as a serf or villein, and made liable to tribute to the lord in labor and in produce. It was only at the dawn of modern times, towards the end of the fifteenth century, that the expropriation of the peasantry on a large scale laid the foundation for the modern class of wage-workers who possess nothing but their labor-power and can live only by the selling of that labor-power to others. But if the expropriation from the land brought this class into existence, it was the development of capitalist production, of modern industry and agriculture on a large scale which perpetuated it, increased it, and shaped it into a distinct class with distinct interests and a distinct historical mission. All this has been fully expounded by Marx. ("Capital," Part VIII: "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation.") According to Marx, the cause of the present antagonism of the classes and of the social degradation of the working class is their expropriation from *all* means of production, in which the land is of course included.

If Henry George declares land-monopolization to be the sole cause of poverty and misery, he naturally finds the remedy in the resumption of the land by society at large. Now, the Socialists of the school of Marx, too, demand the resumption, by society, of the land, and not only of the land, but of all other means of production likewise. But even if we leave these out of the question, there is another difference. What is to be done with the land? Modern

6. Compare Engels to Mrs. Wischnewetzky. Dec. 28, 1886.

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Socialists, as represented by Marx, demand that it should be held and worked in common and for common account, and the same with all other means of social production,—mines, railways, factories, etc. Henry George would confine himself to letting it out to individuals as at present, merely regulating its distribution and applying the rents for public, instead of, as at present, for private purposes. What the Socialists demand implies a total revolution of the whole system of social production; what Henry George demands leaves the present mode of social production untouched, and has, in fact, been anticipated by the extreme section of Ricardian bourgeois economists who, too, demanded the confiscation of the rent of land by the State.

It would of course be unfair to suppose that Henry George has said his last word once for all. But I am bound to take his theory as I find it.

The second great section of the American movement is formed by the Knights of Labor. And that seems to be the section most typical of the present state of the movement, as it is undoubtedly by far the strongest. An immense association spread over an immense extent of country in innumerable "assemblies," representing all shades of individual and local opinion within the working class; the whole of them sheltered under a platform of corresponding indistinctness and held together much less by their impracticable constitution than by the instinctive feeling that the very fact of their clubbing together for their common aspiration makes them a great power in the country; a truly American paradox clothing the most modern tendencies in the most medieval mummeries, and hiding the most democratic and even rebellious spirit behind an apparent, but really powerless despotism—such is the picture the Knights of Labor offer to a European observer. But if we are not arrested by mere outside whimsicalities, we cannot help seeing in this vast agglomeration an immense amount of potential energy evolving slowly but surely into actual force. The Knights of Labor are the first national organization created by the American working class as a whole; whatever be their origin and history, whatever their shortcomings and little absurdities, whatever their platform and their constitution, here they are, the work of practically the whole class of American wage workers, the only national bond that holds them together, that makes their strength felt to themselves not less than to their enemies, and that fills them with the proud hope of future victories. For it would not be exact to say that the Knights of Labor are liable to development. They are constantly in full process of development and revolution; a heaving, fermenting mass

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of plastic material seeking the shape and form appropriate to its inherent nature. That form will be attained as surely as historical evolution has, like natural evolution, its own immanent laws. Whether the Knights of Labor will then retain their present name or not, makes no difference, but to an outsider it appears evident that here is the raw material out of which the future of the American working-class movement, and along with it, the future of American society at large has to be shaped.

The third section consists of the Socialist Labor Party.[7] This section is a party but in name, for nowhere in America has it, up to now, been able actually to take its stand as a political party. It is, moreover, to a certain extent foreign to America, having until lately been made up almost exclusively of German immigrants, using their own language and for the most part little conversant with the common language of the country. But if it came from a foreign stock, it came, at the same time, armed with the experience earned during long years of class-struggle in Europe, and with an insight into the general conditions of working-class emancipation, far superior to that hitherto gained by American workingmen. This is a fortunate circumstance for the American proletarians who thus are enabled to appropriate and to take advantage of the intellectual and moral fruits of the forty years' struggle of their European classmates, and thus to hasten on the time of their own victory. For, as I said before, there cannot be any doubt that the ultimate platform of the American working class must and will be essentially the same as that now adopted by the whole militant working class of Europe, the same as that of the German-American Socialist Labor Party. Insofar as this party is called upon to play a very important part in the movement, and in order to do so, they will have to

7. Engels' remarks concerning the German speaking S. L. P. in this Preface had been received with displeasure by some of them. Writing to Sorge on March 10, 1887, Engels referred to this point, stating: "The Socialist Labor Party may be what it will and appropriate to itself the successes of the work of its predecessors as much as it please, it is still the only labor organization standing entirely on our basis that exists in America, is spread in over 70 sections over the whole North and West, and as such, and only as such have I acknowledged it. That it is a party only in name, I have expressly stated. And I am convinced that the gentlemen of the Executive Committee were very disappointed with my Preface and would rather not have had it. They themselves belong to the tendency of which I say that it will ruin the party if it gets the upperhand. And it seems to be aiming at that. Rosenberg attacks the K. of L. in the local "Justice" because of the longshoremen's strike; may not be entirely wrong in single facts, shows, however, a lack of insight into the course of the movement which will soon ruin the party, if the people continue to govern. Just the stupidities of the ambitious leaders of the K. of L. and their unavoidable conflicts in the eastern metropolises with the Central Labor Unions must bring about the crisis within the K. of L. and drive it to a head, but that the animal does not see."

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doff every remnant of their foreign garb. They will have to become out and out American. They cannot expect the Americans to come to them; they, the minority and the immigrants, must go to the Americans, who are the vast majority and the natives. And to do that, they must above all things learn English.

The process of fusing together these various elements of the vast moving mass—elements not really discordant, but indeed mutually isolated by their various starting-points—will take some time and will not come off without a deal of friction, such as is visible at different points even now. The Knights of Labor, for instance, are here and there, in the Eastern cities, locally at war with the organized Trades Unions. But then this same friction exists within the Knights of Labor themselves, where there is anything but peace and harmony. These are not symptoms of decay for capitalists to crow over. They are merely signs that the innumerable hosts of workers, for the first time set in motion in a common direction, have as yet found out neither the adequate expression for their common interests, nor the form of organization best adapted to the struggle, nor the discipline required to insure victory. They are as yet the first levies en masse of the great revolutionary war, raised and equipped locally and independently, all converging to form one army, but as yet without regular organization and common plan of campaign. The converging columns cross each other here and there; confusion, angry disputes even threats of conflict arise. But the community of ultimate purpose in the end overcomes all minor troubles. Ere long the straggling and squabbling batallions will be formed in a long line of battle array, presenting to the enemy a well-ordered front, ominously silent under their glittering arms, supported by bold skirmishers in front and by unshakeable reserves in the rear.[8]

To bring about this result, the unification of the various independent bodies into one national Labor Army, with no matter how inadequate a provisional platform, provided it be a truly working-class platform—that is the next great step to be accomplished in America. To effect this, and to make that platform worthy of the cause, the Socialist Labor Party can contribute a great deal, if they will only act in the same way as the European Socialists have acted at the time when they were but a small minority of the working class. That line of action was first laid down in the "Communist Manifesto" of 1847 in the following words:

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8. In this comparison, Engels shows clearly the relation of the Communist vanguard to the mass of the working class organized in a labor party.

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"The Communists"—that was the name we took at the time and which even now we are far from repudiating—do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.

"They have no interests separate and apart from the interests of the whole working class.

"They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own by which to shape and model the proletarian movement.

"The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries they point out, and bring to the front, the common interests of the whole proletariat, interests independent of all nationality; 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

"The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of all countries, that section which ever pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have, over the great mass of the proletarians, the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

"Thus they fight for the attainment of the immediate ends, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they represent and take care of the future of the movement."

That is the line of action which the great founder of Modern Socialism, Karl Marx, and with him, I and the Socialists of all nations who worked along with us, have followed for more than forty years, with the result that it has led to victory everywhere, and that at this moment the mass of European Socialists, in Germany and in France, in Belgium, Holland and Switzerland, in Denmark and Sweden, as well as in Spain and Portugal, are fighting as one common army under one and the same flag.

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# The Economics of American Agriculture

*By* A. B. RICHMAN

THE weakest spot in the economic structure of American capitalism is agriculture. For years, a great part of the industrial advance of the country has been at the expense of agriculture. The latter is becoming more and more capitalistic, and in this change finance capital is playing a decisive part. The agrarian population is being expropriated ruthlessly, and the great majority of those remaining on the farm are being reduced from ownership to tenancy, and from both to the status of farm or city laborers.

The following study aims to give a brief picture of the various phases of this process and of the present condition of American agriculture. The political aspects of the problem are not touched upon here, because for lack of space they do not come within the scope of this study. They suggest themselves, however, inevitably, especially when the economic picture which follows is put side by side with the political program of the Left farmers' organizations and the Communist agrarian program.

*Size of farms*: In dealing with the size of farms it must be realized that consideration of total acreage hides the significance of cultivation. This is especially true when we consider the use of labor, machinery, fertilizer, etc. Lenin has pointed out that the use of total acreage per farm "in general cannot be considered as correct." Data on improved land per farm is therefore used in the following table on the size of farms:[1]

| | Improved land per farm | | % improved land is of total acreage per farm | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1920 | 1910 | 1920 | 1910 |
| *North* | | | | |
| New England | 39.1 | 38.4 acres | 36.0 | 36.8% |
| Middle Atlantic | 62.5 | 62.6 | 65.5 | 67.9 |
| East No. Central | 81.0 | 79.2 | 74.7 | 75.4 |
| West No. Central | 156.2 | 148.0 | 66.7 | 70.6 |
| Average | 84.7 | 81.8 | 60.7 | 62.7 |

1. Abstract of the XIV Census of 1920. Washington, p. 192.



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| *South* | 1920 | 1910 | 1920 | 1910 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| South Atlantic | 41.9 | 43.6 | 49.6 | 46.7 |
| East So. Central | 42.2 | 42.2 | 56.3 | 53.9 |
| West So. Central | 64.4 | 61.8 | 37.0 | 34.4 |
| Average | 49.5 | 49.2 | 44.3 | 45.0 |
| *West* | | | | |
| Mountain | 123.3 | 86.8 | 25.7 | 26.7 |
| Pacific | 102.2 | 116.1 | 42.6 | 42.9 |
| Average | 112.8 | 101.5 | 34.2 | 34.8 |
| Average for United States | 78.0 | 75.2 | 52.6 | 54.4 |

Considering only improved land, the average farm in New England is smaller than in any other division, but this and the Middle Atlantic division have crops that, from the point of view of capitalistic development, make for far more intensive cultivation —fruits, vegetables, dairy products, etc. They also use relatively more fertilizer, labor and machinery. In the North Central States the average farm is much larger but is devoted to grains and hay, which require extensive rather than intensive cultivation. In the South the average farm is small because every cropper's and tenant's farm is considered a separate farm, although actually a great percentage of them are only parts of large plantations.

In the North there has been a steady increase in the size of farms since 1800, signifying that the capitalistic tendencies in agriculture (large scale farming with much labor and machinery) are growing stronger in that section. In the South a decrease in average size means an increase in capitalistic development, for it has resulted in the breaking up of great plantations, indicating the transition to petty commercialized farming. In the West, the enormous increase in the number of farms has been due to the great amount of settlement of new lands under the homestead laws.

In New England and the Middle Atlantic Divisions of the North latifundia (estates with over 1000 acres) are fewer than anywhere else and average 1600 acres each. The West North Central Division has a much larger number of such farms (20,000 compared with 1750 in the other three northern divisions) and the average size is much larger (2150 acres). Ninety-two percent of the acreage of all the four northern divisions is in this one division. The number of small and large farms, considering total acreage per farm, has been increasing, while the number of medium sized ones has been decreasing:[2]

2. Abstract of the XIV Census of 1920. Washington, p. 606.

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| *Size* | *No. of Farms (in thousands)* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1920 | 1910 | 1900 |
| Small (less than 100 acres) | 3,775 | 3,691 | 3,297 |
| Medium (100-175) | 1,450 | 1,516 | 1,422 |
| Large (175-1000) | 1,156 | 1,103 | 971 |
| Latifundia (over 1000) | 67.4 | 50.1 | 47.2 |

*Farm land*: The decline in the value of farm real estate in the seven years of the farm crisis is shown in the following data:[3]

*Index Number of Value of Farm Real Estate* (1912-14=100%)

| | 1920 | 1926 | 1927 | 1920-27 | 1926-7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mississippi | 218 | 134 | 126 | 92 | 8 |
| United States | 169 | 124 | 119 | 50 | 5 |
| North (West No. Central) | 184 | 121 | 115 | 69 | 6 |
| West (Mountain) | 151 | 103 | 101 | 50 | 2 |
| South (East So. Central) | 199 | 139 | 133 | 66 | 6 |
| Iowa | 213 | 130 | 121 | 92 | 9 |
| Georgia | 218 | 112 | 104 | 114 | 8 |

In practically every division the value of farm real estate has declined from year to year since the high point of 1920. In every division there has been a decline from 1926 to 1927 and also in every state in the country except one or two. The value of farm lands increased during the decade 1900-10 by 15.4 billion dollars or 118 percent, and during the next decade by 26.4 billion or 92.5 percent more. Between 1920-25 however, it decreased from 54.8 billion to 37.8 billion or 31.2 percent. Senator Nye has estimated that the value of farm lands decreased 4 billion dollars since 1924. Land rent is about one-fourth of the cost of production of wheat and corn and amounted to much more than that percentage of the gross income of all farmers.[4]

*Agricultural production.* The cost of production of many principle farm products was greater than the price received by the farmer during recent years. The only explanation of how farmers can continue in business on such a basis is the rapidly increasing rate of expropriation, as shown hereafter by the great increase in the abandonment of farms, in mortgage debt, in tenancy, etc. In 1926 the average cost of production of corn was 70 cents a bushel, while the average price paid to the farmer was 64½ cents. The cost of production of wheat was only slightly less than the average price paid to the farmer. One factor behind the situation has been indicated by an American Senator who showed how the farm implement trust

3. U. S. Department of Agriculture "Crops and Markets" (Monthly Journal) Washington, August 1927, p. 296.
4. N. Y. Nation, 20, X, 27; U. S. Daily, Washington, 19, X. 27.

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robs the farmer, when he pointed out that a hoe or a rake with a declared export value of 44 cents costs the farmer $1.00.

The total value of production for the fiscal year 1926-27 was 12,080 millions, or 5,000 million less than the previous year. The decrease was mainly in value of cereals and cotton. The scissors has to a great extent been responsible for the present agricultural depression and has operated for a long time. Since 1900 production costs have been so high that they have played havoc with profits. Overhead capital costs, such as taxes and interest, which increased 60 percent, in the 20 years before 1900, have increased 600 percent during a like period since.

To take a more recent period, the annual report of Secretary of Agriculture Jardine, issued in December, 1927,[5] shows that the past five years (1922-26) saw an increase in crop production of 5 percent above that of the previous five-year period, and an increase in animal products of 15 percent, although the total acreage has decreased somewhat. The productivity per agricultural worker during the recent five-year period has increased 15 percent over the previous 5 years, due partly to greater use of machinery and power, and partly to more productive use of crops and stock. Of the increase in productivity during the recent five years, 1/3 is due to increased production per acre and 2/3 to a shift toward crops with greater productivity per acre.

Jardine concludes, however, that "the advantage of increased efficiency to the farmer may be largely offset through increased total output and reduced prices per unit of production."[6]

AGRICULTURAL PRICES[7]

(5 year period, 1909-1914=100%)

| Index of | Prices paid to farmers for farm products | Wholesale prices of non-agricultural commodities | Relative purchasing power of farmers' dollar |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1920 | 205% | 241% | 85% |
| 1921 | 116 | 167 | 69 |
| 1925 | 147 | 165 | 89 |
| 1926 | 136 | 161 | 85 |
| 1927 | 128 | 152 | 86 |

Though the farmer gets only 28 percent above pre-war prices for his products, he must pay 52 percent more for the non-agricultural goods he buys. The relative purchasing power of the farmer's dollar, obtained by dividing column 1 by column 2 above, is

5. N. Y. Commercial and Financial Chronicle, 10, XII, 27, p. 3131.
6. Annual report, ibid.
7. U. S. Dep't of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, "The Agricultural Situation," Monthly Journal, Washington, October, 1927, p. 9.

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now worth only 86 percent of pre-war. The prices of farm products in April, 1927, were the lowest in five years, so that through the trend in the purchasing power of farm products has been upward since, this movement is from a very low point. The Department of Agriculture is beginning to warn the farmers against over-expansion in sheep-raising and egg-production, which have brought relatively good prices since 1921. The Fertilizer Manufacturers' Association warns against the evident trend toward too great cotton production in 1928. Hog prices are also expected to decline in 1928.[8] Wheat production for 1928 will probably be 13 percent greater than for 1927, if judged by the increased acreage to be planted and the Department of Agriculture is warning the wheat farmers to be "prepared to sell their wheat on a world market basis," i.e., to be prepared to accept still lower prices next year.[9]

| AGRICULTURAL INCOME[10] | 1919-20 | 1925-26 | 1926-27 |
|---|---|---|---|
| (A) Value all capital invested (bil. $) | 79.5 | 59.7 | 58.3 |
| (B) Value net investment (bil. $) | 47.1 | 32.7 | 31.8 |
| (C) Income on A | $5,030 | $3,082 | $2,440 |
| (D) Rate of income on A | 6.3% | 5.2% | 4.2% |
| (E) Income on B | 5.7% | 4.3% | 2.7% |
| (F) Rate of income on B | — | 13% | 13% |
| (G) Rate of income of corporations | 15.72 | 12.67 | 12.08 |
| (H) Gross income of agric, prod. (bil $) | 24 | 17 | 16.3 |
| (I) Gross value (bil. $) | $2,675 | $1,413 | $ 874 |
| (J) Rate of gross income | 1919-20 equals | | |
| (K) Rate interest on mortgages, etc., debts | 100% | 86% | 77% |
| (L) Rate interest on property rented | 6.7% | 6.4% | 6.3% |
| (M) Income for capital, labor and management | 8.3% | 7.4% | 7.1% |
| | $1,246 | $ 922 | $ 853 |
| (N) Income available for labor and management | $ 917 | $ 690 | $ 627 |
| | | 84% | 86% |
| *Rate of earnings for:* | | 101% | 101% |
| (O) Average hired hand | 1919-20 equals | | |
| Average factory worker | 100% | 77% | 70% |
| Average farm family | | | |

Besides the nearly 15 billion dollar loss during these five years, owners of rented farms lost 5-3/4 billion of their equity in their property.[11]

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8. U. S. Daily, Washington, 29, IX., 27, N. Y. Annalist, 10, VI., 27.

9. U. S. Daily, Washington, 11, X, 27.

10. U. S. Dep't of Agriculture, "Crops and Markets" Monthly Journal, Washington, July, 1927.

11. Ibid, July, 1925, p. 252-4.

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The current value of all capital invested (A) includes value of land buildings, live stock, tools, autos, machinery, etc., and an allowance for working capital. Net investment (B) is equal to total capital investment minus property rented from others and debts owed to others. In the year 1920-21 the value of net capital invested decreased about 6 billion dollars from the previous fiscal year and the income on it dropped to a loss for the year of $1,720 (minus 4.2 percent). In 1925 income on net capital investment was 14.1 percent, after labor of the farmer and his family were paid for. These figures are the average for the country, but for the South they are far less, for the West more and for the North average.[12]

Statistics show a gradual recovery, though a slight one, until the year 1925-26, but this was largely due to the decrease in the current value of agricultural capital. Between 1921 and 1927 the value of all agricultural capital declined from 73 to 58 billions or 20.5 percent whereas corporation capital increased from 99 to 134 billions, or 35 percent.

The rate of income (C) on all capital invested is after payment of taxes and expenses and after allowing a wage for the farmer and his family. It does not, however, include any allowance for depreciation, etc. The farmer's rate of income was earned on a rapidly shrinking market value of his capital, whereas the high income of all corporations (E) was earned on an increasing current value. The latter was three times as great as the former. The rate of income (D) on the net investment of capital is on the same basis as the rate of income on all capital invested (C). During the five years from 1920 to 1925 the net income was 1.7 percent according to the National Industrial Conference Board. If the value of food, fuel and shelter supplied by the farm is deducted, the net income is estimated at 170 dollars in the better years, and at literally less than nothing in the leaner ones. This 1.7 percent is on *assessed* value, and is really less if based upon *actual* value.[13]

The rate of interest paid on mortgage and other indebtedness (I) and that paid on rented property (J) show what large parts of the farmers' income were distributed to absentee owners of agricultural capital and owners of farm mortgages—largely bankers. Total interest paid on indebtedness in the year 1924-25 amounted to an average of 30 percent of the net cash income after payment of other expenses.[14] Corporations' profits (E) include compensation

12. U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, "Year Book of Agriculture" (Annual Reports), Washington, 1926, p. 1207.
13. N. Y. Times, New York, 2, I, 27.
14. National Industrial Conference Board "The Agricultural Problem," New York, 1926, p. 124.

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to officers, and deductions for depreciation etc. These profits were 75.4 billion in 1921 and 95.2 billion in 1925. During the war the Government stimulated both agriculture and industry to increase production. After the war the city war industries were dismantled at the expense of the government, but agriculture was not only reduced by the government to a peace-time basis but was even stimulated to further expansion.[15]

Income available for capital, labor and management (K) does not include any allowance of interest on net capital invested. Income available for labor and management (L) allows an interest of 4.5 percent on net capital invested. Gross income decreased 5 percent from 1926 to 1927, although expenses of production decreased only 2 percent.[16]

MORTGAGE AND OTHER INDEBTEDNESS[17]—INDEX OF *Increase in Land Value compared with Increase in Mortgage between* 1910 *and* 1920.

| Division | Land value | Total mortgage | Owners' mortgages | Tenants' mortgages |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *South* | | | | |
| East So. Central | 110.8% | 199.7% | 172.9% | 266.9% |
| West So. Central | 101.8 | 162.3 | 146.3 | 194.8 |
| *West* | | | | |
| Mountain | 139.7 | 489.4 | 448.6 | 858.7 |
| Pacific | 88.4 | 215.1 | 214.5 | 218.6 |
| *North* | | | | |
| Middle Atlantic | 22.9 | 33.8 | 43.7 | —0.8 (loss) |
| West No. Central | | | | |
| U. S. | 90.6 | 147.7 | 128.4 | 217.1 |

The above table gives the geographic divisions in the South, West and North which show the smallest and largest increases in mortgage debt during the decade between 1910 and 1920. Values in 1920 were very greatly inflated and the following year the drastic deflation began. The increase in mortgage indebtedness in the industrial North was far less than in the South or West, partly because of the type of farming there (dairy, poultry and truck gardening—crops which were less hit by deflation than those upon which the South and West depend). The West North Central States alone

15. See statement by Assistant Secretary Gore in section on "Living Conditions."
16. All data following table on income are from U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, "Crops and Markets" (Monthly Journal), Washington, for July, 1927, except where otherwise noted.
17. Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science, "The Agricultural Situation in the U. S.," Jan., 1925, Philadelphia, p. 67.

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account for 39 percent of the bank loans to farmers, and the East North Central States, for 10 percent—a total of 58 percent for the "middle west" (No. Central States).[18]

In 1890, 27.8 percent of all farm owners had their farms mortgaged. In 1910, 33.2 percent were mortgaged, by 1920 the number mortgaged was 37.2 percent and probably a similar proportion of the 10 percent of owners who made no reports on their mortgage status were also mortgaged. In every division of the country the increase in the average mortgage debt per farm was much greater than the increase in the average value of land and buildings per farm. For the country as a whole, the average mortgage debt increased 12 percent more than the increase in average value.[19]

In 1920 only 10 percent of all farm operators in the U. S. under 25 years of age were full owners, free from mortgage, while only 51 percent of all farmers over 55 years of age were free from mortgage and only 64 percent of those over 65 years of age.[20] When a young farmer buys a farm he assumes a life-long debt. The Government land-bank system recognizes this and allows as high as 33 years for repayment of mortgage loans. Most debts were acquired at the cheap money levels existing before 1920 but the fixed charges for interest and principal must now be repaid independent of future prices.

*Total Farm Indebtedness from* 1910 *to* 1925 (*Million Dollars*).

| | 1910 | 1920 | 1925 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mortgage Indebtedness | 3,200 | 7,860 | 8,500 |
| Personal Indebtedness | 1,000 | 3,250 | 3,250 |
| Miscellaneous Indebtedness (Merchandise, implements, autos, etc.) | 500 | 500 | 500 |
| | 4,700 | 11,610 | 12,250 |

In 1910, interest on mortgages and rent were being paid on 57 percent of all farm values. In 1920, this increased to 65 percent. During this decade tenancy increased 3.8 percent, so that the major portion of the 8 percent increase during the decade was probably due to increase in mortgage debt.[22]

18. N. Y. Times, New York, II, VII, 27, report of National Industrial Conference Board.
19. Abstract of the XIV Census of 1920, Washington, p. 739-743.
20. Warren and Pearson "The Agricultural Situation—Economic Effect of Fluctuating Prices," New York, 1924, p. 43.
21. Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science, "The Agricultural Situation in the U. S.", Jan., 1925, Philadelphia, 37. Miscellaneous indebtedness for 1925 was 500 millions; though no data is available for 1910 and 1920 and for these years it was probably less, the same amount is assumed.
22. Ibid, p. 68.

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*Relation of Mortgage Debt to Land Value and Capital Invested* [23]

| | 1920 | 1925 |
|---|---|---|
| Value of farm real estate (Bil. dollars) | 54.8 | 37.8 |
| Value of Real Estate of owners with mortgaged farms (Bil. dollars) | 13.8 | 10.8 |
| Amount of mortgage debt on above (Bil. dollars) | 4.0 | 4.5 |
| Rate of Mortgage Debt of above | 29.1% | 41.9% |

Between 1914 and 1925 the interest burden in relation to the value of the farm property increased by 54%.[24] At the end of 1921, 15% of the total mortgage debt was held by insurance companies, 25% by farm mortgage bankers, 15% by other farm loan companies, 6% by Government farm loan-banks, and 39% by local investors and merchants, private bankers, other farmers, etc. The percentage of farmers holding mortgages is negligible compared with those held by finance capital.[25]

(*To be continued next month*)

23. U. S. Daily, Washington, 6-IV-27; U. S. Department of Agriculture "Crops and Markets" Monthly Journal, Washington, July, 1927.

24. National Industrial Conference Board "The Agricultural Problem," New York, 1926, p. 121.

25. Workers Monthly, September, 1925.

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# De Leonism and Communism

*By* KARL REEVE

LET us begin by briefly outlining, in the light of what Marx and Engels wrote, and in the light of Marxism-Leninism, De Leon's doctrine on the state, still expounded by the Socialist Labor Party and others in spite of the great lessons of the present epoch of imperialism and the proletarian dictatorship in Russia. De Leon's theory, many times repeated from the year 1904 until his death in 1914, did not include the conception of a transition period from capitalism to socialism. De Leon believed that the present capitalist state, the "Political State," will be destroyed by the political party of the working class—to him, the S. L. P.—and that with this "destructive act" the function of the revolutionary party came to an end. He believed that the revolutionary Industrial Union—in 1895 the Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance and later the I. W. W. —would *at once* become what he termed the "Industrial State." This change meant the end of the state "immediately" as an instrument of class rule and its transformation into the Industrial Union as a director and co-ordinator of the industries, the technical administrator of production. The "Industrial State" therefore, would be no state at all but a purely administrative organ. The change marked at the same time the change from parliaments elected by geographical areas, to a directing body, the Industrial Union, elected on the basis of occupations through the sections of the industrial unions. De Leon believed that the revolution would come first in the United States because the United States was the most advanced capitalist country, industrially. He was also opposed to the advocacy of the armed insurrection of the working class, or the use of force other than the force "inherent" in the Industrial Union. He believed that civil war is not a necessary outcome of the class-struggle. In this article De Leon's conception of the State will form the main theme, as far as these points can be separated, and the question of force, etc., will be dealt with in another article.

It is not necessary in this post-war imperialist era to dwell long on the necessity of the capitalist countries to pass through the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat. One need only read such books as Lenin's "State and Revolution." Marx many times spoke of the necessity for the workers to seize political power and wield it during the transition period to complete socialism. De Leon, however, did



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not fully grasp this aspect of Marx's teachings, believing that the transition period would not take place, and that it was not necessary for the workers to wield political power after the revolution. Before taking up more fully De Leon's idea of the state, let us refresh our memories with several brief quotations from Marx and Engels on the necessity of the proletariat to wield political power in the transition period.

## MARX ON THE STATE

In the Communist Manifesto (1848) we read: "The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties; formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, *conquest of political power by the proletariat.* . . . We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy. *The proletariat will use its political supremacy* to wrest by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the *proletariat organized as the ruling class;* and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." (My emphasis—K. R.)

The supremacy of the proletariat as a class, the seizing and holding of political power by that class, the wielding of the weapon of the state in the transition period was designated by Marx as the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. This transition state will gradually disappear as the heritages from old capitalist conditions of production are abolished by the workers' state, as the remnants of the bourgeois class are crushed. Until this process is completed and the classless society, complete socialism emerges, there will be this transition, the workers' state.

Marx's view is made more clear in the Civil War in France (1871). In speaking of the Paris Commune Marx said, "Its true secret was this. It was essentially a *Working Class Government,* the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor." Lenin, in "State and Revolution" points out "the only 'correction' which Marx thought it necessary to make in the Communist Manifesto, was made by him on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Communards." Lenin then points out that this "correction" was that the workers cannot merely lay hold of the ready-made state machinery but must break it, shatter it, and replace it by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (See State and Revolution—ch. 3 sect. 2). Marx in his letter to Kugelmann of April 12, 1871, also

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speaks of the shattering of the bourgeois state as follows, "If you look at the last chapter of my 'Eighteenth Brumaire' you will find that I declare the next attempt of the French revolution to be: not merely to hand over, from one to another, the bureaucratic and military machine, as has occurred hitherto—but to SHATTER it; and this is the preliminary condition of any real people's revolution on the continent." (See *The Communist*, March, 1927—Marx's emphasis—K. R.)

Engels, in his introduction to the 3rd German edition of the "Civil War in France," said in 1891, "The German petty bourgeoisie has again been soundly terrified by the words: The Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well, gentlemen, if you wish to know what the dictatorship looks like, look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

Again, in his letter to Wiedemeyer (quoted by Lenin in State and Revolution, ch. 2, sect. 3) Marx wrote, . . . "What I did prove, was the following: (1) That the existence of classes is connected only with certain historical struggles which are characteristic of the development of production; (2) That the class war inevitably leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) That this dictatorship is only a transition to the destruction of all classes and to a society without classes." And in speaking of this statement, Lenin adds that a Marxist cannot *only* recognize the class war, that "a Marxist is one who EXTENDS the recognition of class war to the recognition of the DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT. In this is the main difference between a Marxist and an ordinary bourgeois." (Lenin's emphasis—K. R.)

Lastly, there is Marx's statement in the "Criticism of the Gotha Program" (1875), where he says, "Between capitalist and communist society there lies a period of revolutionary transformation from the former to the latter. A stage of political transition corresponds to this period, and the State during this period can be none other than the *Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat.*" (Marx's emphasis—K. R.)

## DE LEON ON THE STATE

In the light of Marx's and Engels' clear recognition of the necessity for the transition period, of the fact that the state, after the revolution, must be used in this transition period as an instrument of class suppression—of suppression of the bourgeoisie by the working class—in the light of their recognition that the workers must wield political power under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, let us examine what De Leon says on the subject.

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In 1901, in his address delivered in Boston, and later printed under the title, "Socialism vs. Anarchism," De Leon devotes a few words to the subject of the seizure of the power by the workers. His remarks are somewhat unclear. However, they might be interpreted as a statement of the necessity of the transition period from capitalism to communism. Unfortunately, however, they fall outside of De Lean's oft-repeated doctrine, stated above, which he continued to announce until his death.

De Leon says, "True enough, you must seek to capture the government . . . but not as either a finality or a starter. The overthrow of the government you must aim at must be the end of using the governmental power to perfect the revolution that must have preceded your conquest of the public powers. The initial revolution must take place in your own minds". . . . "You must, in consequence, have first learned what use to make of the government when gotten, to wit, to use it as a social lever with which to establish the Socialist Republic and install the government that our needs require and that civilization needs . . . when elected, the Socialist Labor Party, the government you shall have chosen, must, in order to be effective, be something not outside of, not separate and apart from you."

It will be noted that here De Leon expressed the thought that the S. L. P., the future socialist government, would be *elected* to power, which we know, is taken from the program of the reformists. This conception of the state and revolution is not Marxian. The necessity pointed out by Marx, in the above quoted letter to Kugelmann, a lesson Marx expounded, after the Paris Commune, to *shatter* the bourgeois state and set up their own dictatorship, was not recognized by De Leon. Rather, the old social-democratic reformist policy of peacefully taking over the government by voting into power a majority is voiced. And we know it is impossible to vote the bourgeoisie out of power. De Leon did not realize that the State machinery must be *smashed* and replaced by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. De Leon, although he changed his conception of the role of the political party, as will be presently shown, throughout his career failed to understand that the state is an organ of suppression by a class; an organ which can be used as an instrument in the hands of the workers to suppress the capitalist class. The latter form of state, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, is used by the working class, by the masses, by the producers, by the majority, to suppress the capitalist class, the minority, the exploiters.

In this *new* form of state democracy exists for the majority, as Lenin points out, proletarian democracy, and dictatorship is used against the remnants of the bourgeoisie. De Leon on the other hand,

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and the S. L. P. of today, regarded the state as an instrument of suppression to be used only by the capitalist class and did not conceive of this new form of state spoken of by Marx and Engels, the state of a transition to a classless, socialist society when suppression becomes unnecessary. He did not understand that the state is not peacefully handed from one class to another but must be smashed by the workers and a new proletarian state formed.

De Leon, in the above quotation, regarded the political party of the working class, and not the economic organization, as the organ to take over "the government" and guide the socialist republic. This in spite of the fact that as early as 1895 he had been the moving spirit in the forming of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, which it was announced had the supreme mission of becoming the future state. De Leon later, instead of more closely approaching the Marxian viewpoint, more widely deviated from it by adopting his false conception of the role of the political party of the working class.

De Leon stated his ideas on the subject most clearly in his address in 1905 on "The Preamble of the I. W. W." delivered in Minneapolis and later published by the S. L. P. under the title "The Socialist Reconstruction of Society," his best known work. De Leon later frequently quoted his remarks made in this speech, and reiterated the doctrine here expressed, which is not the same as that quoted above, many times. He first pays his respects to the "Political State," the organ of oppression of the capitalist class, which is organized by geographical areas. While the industries are to be "taken and held" for the purpose of further developing them for the benefit of all, "it is exactly the reverse with the 'political power.' That is to be taken for the purpose of *abol'shing* it. It follows therefrom that the goal of the political movement of labor is purely *destructive*." De Leon then supposes that at some election we won, so decisively that we could not be counted out. "Suppose that, what would there be for them (our candidates) to do? Simply *to adjourn themselves on the spot, sine die*. Their work would be done by disbanding." (De Leon's emphasis—K. R.)

Here we see that De Leon gives the political party of the working class an entirely different role than that given it in his Boston speech quoted above. There he said the S. L. P. would be elected, would take over the government, and would use it as a lever with which to establish the Socialist Republic. Here we see clearly what this means. The political party must merely *destroy* capitalism, (by the peaceful means of the ballot, however). Its function *immediately* ends and the Industrial Union at once steps in and begins

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to function as the "Industrial State" which is not a state at all, not an organ of suppression of the capitalist class, but an organ for administration of industry only. In the next article De Leon's errors on the role of the party will be more fully dealt with. Here, in passing, it must be noticed that De Leon as shown in his 1905 speech believed it necessary for the political party of the workers to remain in its form of geographical areas because of the necessity of using methods to conform to this capitalist era. Lenin, on the other hand, as early as 1902 pointed out the necessity of the political party to have its basis not in geographical areas, but in the *factories*. "Every factory must be our fortress" he wrote, and throughout the existence of the Bolshevik party up until 1917, and of course, after, he insisted on the organization of the party, as widely as possible, on the basis of factory nuclei (see Lenin on Organization, pages 14 and 111). De Leon, who failed to understand that the party of the working class must lead the struggle to attain and hold political power, must lead in the work within the industrial and other unions, through forming party fractions, attributed to the political party no role, no existence, after the capture of the state power.

Then as to De Leon's "destructive act." This idea of the passing over of the state into the hands of the Industrial Union, when as an instrument of a class the state ceases to exist, shows a fundamental misconception of the role of the state, a conception which is essentially reformist. This destructive act either leaves the state untouched, according to his 1901 speech or entirely abolishes it, according to later statements. De Leon did not fully understand the significance of Marx's statements, quoted above where he says that the smashing of the bureaucratic, bourgeois state machine, is the essential preliminary to revolution. And this arises out of his failing to understand the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

De Leon makes himself even plainer as he continues: "The political movement of Labor that, in the event of triumph, would prolong its existence a second after the triumph, would be a usurpation. It would be either a usurpation or the signal for a social catastrophe. It would be the signal for a social catastrophe if the political triumph did not find the working class of the land industrially organized, that is, in full possession of the plants of production and distribution, capable, accordingly, to assume the integral conduct of the productive powers of the land. The catastrophe would be instantaneous. The plants of production and distribution having remained in capitalist hands, production would be instantly blocked."

## A "PREMATURE" REVOLUTION

This last paragraph explains why the S. L. P. designates the Rus-

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sian revolution as "premature," and refuses to learn anything from the three Russian revolutions. None of them immediately turned the power over to the Industrial Union. Which, in fact, did not exist, and hence the Bolsheviks violated De Leon's program, an unforgivable sin. The workers of Russia, after gaining political power, led by their vanguard, the Communist Party of Russia, only then, with the aid of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, were able to build up large industrial unions. Surprisingly, the working class of Russia was able to prevent the "catastrophe" of which De Leon spoke so positively. The C. P. of Russia did not disband, the non-existant Industrial Unions did not take over the State, and hence, the S. L. P. believes that the Russian revolution was not really a social revolution. Even in 1921 when millions had been organized in the industrial unions, the attempt of the Workers Opposition to set up these unions as the head of economic life was successfully combatted by Lenin. In reality, the workers must have political power. They need the dictatorship, not only to gain the support of the majority of the poor and middle peasantry, and of what Lenin termed the "non-proletarian working masses," which support of *all* the toilers can be gained only *after* the proletariat has seized political power, has created the new state, but they need the political power in order to do this *while crushing the resistance of the remnants of the capitalist class.* As long as there are classes or remnants of classes, a certain form of the state is necessary. De Leon did not recognize that the workers' state, the proletarian dictatorship, "withers away" *after* the workers have gained political power, and after they have wielded it to crush the exploiters and to introduce socialist society. De Leon thus speaks of the possibility of "amputating" the state, meaning of destroying the state and simultaneously ushering in a classless society.

De Leon continues, "On the other hand, if the political triumph does find the working class industrially organized, then for the political movement to prolong its existence would be to attempt to usurp the powers which its very triumph announces have devolved upon the central administration of the industrial organization. The 'reason' for a political movement obviously unfits it to 'take and hold' the machinery of production. What the political movement moves into is not the shops, but the Robber Burg of capitalism—for the purpose of dismantling it" . . "in the act however, of 'taking and holding' the nation's plants of production, the political organization of the working class can give no help. Its mission will have come to an end just before the consummation of that consummating act of Labor's emancipation. . . . Where the General

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Executive Board of the I. W. W. will sit, there will be the nation's capital. As the slough shed by the serpent that immediately reappears in its new skin, the Political State will have been shed and society will simultaneously appear in its administrative garb."

Here we see, in spite of De Leon's statement of 1901, that four years later, De Leon had no conception of the transition state—of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and failed to absorb Marx's and Engels' lessons quoted above. "*Immediately*" the state as a political power disappears and "*simultaneously*" the state is transformed into a classless administrator. This statement also is disproved by the Russian revolution of 1917. Disproved, that is for all except the present S. L. P. The S. L. P. faced by the facts of history, must either charge history, charge Marx and Engels, with being wrong, and shut their eyes to the necessity for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, or admit that De Leon made a mistake. What! De Leon mistaken. No! History, Marx, Engels, Lenin, must be wrong!

There is one other statement of De Leon's, a few words, which gives the correct approach to the question of the State, and which is in contradiction to his main doctrine. In the Daily People of March 17, 1907, two years after the above quoted speech was made, De Leon recognized the necessity for the transition period. He said, "Marx clearly shows that the proletariat must organize politically so that it can control the transition state and introduce socialism." (This quotation is taken from the Nov., 1926, issue of the Workers' Monthly in an article by Ellis Peterson. It was re-translated from the Swedish S. L. P. paper Arbetaren).

This statement, although it falls outside of De Leon's principal doctrine, raises him head and shoulders above the present-day S. L. P. The present S. L. P. which has fourteen years of experience after De Leon's death, experience of the war and post-war period of imperialism, which has had a chance to study ten years of the dictatorship before its very eyes, in the Soviet Union, not to mention the experience of a number of European revolutions—the present S. L. P. brushes all these experiences aside and brushes aside this statement of De Leon. It is left to the Communists to show the advance made by De Leon over his party—the wisdom of the father as compared to the idiot child. Instead of expanding on this conception and making it clearer, the S. L. P. prefers to forget it, so as to be better able to join the reformists of the Second International in its attack on the world Communist movement.

We must remember, however, that De Leon did not base his program on these rare glimmerings of the truth. On the contrary,

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we find that *after* writing the above recognition of the necessity of the transition period, De Leon continued to repeat his formula, —Political State-Industrial State—with nothing in between. For example, all of the programs of the S. L. P. fail to mention the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The 1912 program of the S. L. P. repeats De Leon's old idea of the political state immediately giving way to the industrial state. It says, "The Political State, another name for the Class State, is worn out in this, the leading capitalist nation of the world, most prominently. The Industrial or Socialist State is throbbing for birth. . . The program of the Socialist Labor Party is *revolution*—the Industrial or Socialist Republic, the Social Order where the Political State is overthrown."

No mention of the transition period, either in this, or any other program of the S. L. P. De Leon concisely repeats his main formula, in his article "Industrial Unionism," printed in pamphlet form under that title by the S. L. P. This article originally appeared in the Daily People on January 20, 1913, a little more than a year before De Leon's death and six years after his reference to the transition period, quoted above. He repeats, just as clearly as he did in 1905, his mistakes with regard to the state. We read, "The overthrow of Class Rule means the overthrow of the Political State, and its substitution with the industrial social order, under which the necessaries for production are collectively owned and operated by and for the people. . . . Industrial Unionism, free from optical illusions, is clear upon the goal—the substitution of the Political State with the Industrial Government. . . . Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the Industrial Union is the Socialist Republic in operation. Accordingly, Industrial Unionism is at once the battering ram with which to pound down the fortress of capitalism, and the successor of the capitalist social structure itself." This statement also, of course, is proven false by the Russian revolution. In Russia, although there was no large industrial union, the revolution was achieved, led by the Bolshevik party. The Bolshevik party was the "battering ram," was the vanguard of the working class which led the workers through the revolution and afterwards guided also the Soviet State and the industrial unions.

De Leon repeats his views, which are adulterated with syndicalism, in an editorial "With Marx For Text" which appeared in the Daily People in 1907. He said, "The revolutionary act of achieving the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism is the function reserved to the economic organization . . .

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the physical force called for by the Revolutionary Act lies inherent in the economic organization" (He also repeats this view of the state in the following:—Editorial, Industrial Unionism, 1904—Father Gassoniana, 1911—Daily People, Editorial, Sept. 2, 1911, "The Political State on the Rocks—Editorial, May 14, 1911 "Jeffersonianism"—Berger's Hits and Misses—Fifteen Questions Answered, 1913—See also Reform and Revolution, 1896).

We have now established that although De Leon once or twice came near to hitting upon the Marxian attitude towards the transition period (something of which the present day S. L. P. is not guilty) in his principle teachings De Leon restricted the role of the political party of the working class to that of destroying the capitalist state. He did not recognize that in the United States especially, with its big bureaucracy, and large army and navy with its large strata of masses corrupted by imperialism, in spite of the highly developed industry the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is necessary to crush out the bourgeoisie and all counter-revolutionary elements, to build up complete socialism by wielding political power during the introduction of socialist economy. He had a false conception of the role of the trade unions. De Leon made the mistake of attributing to the mass organization, the industrial union, which does not even exist as a mass organization before the dictatorship, a role which it is impossible for it to fill even after the dictatorship. Lenin has shown that only the political party of the working class, which is a part, the most energetic, conscious and advanced section of that class, can carry through the revolution at the head of the class, establish the proletarian dictatorship and introduce socialism. De Leon did not grasp the importance of the factory work for the political party as Lenin did, and instead set up a duality of industrial union-political party. De Leon's S. L. P. supporters take pride in pointing out that he added to Marx his conception of the role of Industrial Unionism. True this is an addition, this is not a part of Marxism. The denial of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is not a part of Marxism, the denial of the role of the party as the leader of the working class is not a part of Marxism, the denial of the necessity for civil war (which will be taken up later) is not a part of Marxism and last the conception of the immediate destruction of the capitalist state and the simultaneous emergence of a classless society is not a part of Marxism. All are opposed to Marxism.

(*Continued next month*)

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# A Program on Unemployment

*Policies adopted by the Central Executive Committee of the Workers' (Communist) Party*

### I. *Unemployment Insurance*

1. A Federal system of unemployment insurance should be established. A Federal law must be enacted immediately by Congress, providing for unemployment insurance for all wage-earners without any exceptions or disqualifications.
2. The amount of compensation shall be full wages for the entire period of unemployment, the maximum to be $30. per week. Payment shall be due from date of unemployment.
3. No worker shall be disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance because he refuses work at wages below what he was formerly receiving or below the prevailing trade-union rates, or because of strikes.
4. An unemployment insurance fund shall be created, fifty per cent to be contributed by the employers and fifty per cent by the State. The amount contributed by the State shall be raised by special taxes levied against inheritance, high incomes, and corporation profits.
5. The administration of unemployment insurance shall be carried out by Federal, State, and City unemployment insurance commissions composed of representatives of trade unions, organizations of the unemployed, and factory, mill, and mine committees.
6. Abolition of private employment agencies, which exploit the jobless, charging high fees. Provision of government funds for the establishment of free employment agencies, through which all jobs shall be distributed. The agencies shall be managed by the trade unions and unemployed organizations.

### II. *Working Hours, Women's and Child Labor*

1. Immediate enactment of a Federal law providing for a general 44-hour week, 5-day week working time, and forbidding all overtime, as a means of absorbing the unemployed in industry.



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2. The law shall provide for an especially short working day in especially dangerous industries.
3. Abolition of the speed-up system and equal division of work in all factories and shops.
4. Immediate enactment of a Federal law providing for one day of rest in seven for all wage-earners.
5. Prohibition by law of night work and over-time for working women.
6. Compulsory abolition of child labor under the age of 16 and State maintenance of all children at present employed.
7. Abolition of underground work, night work, over-time, and work in dangerous occupations for all young workers. Six-hour working day for all workers between the ages of 16 and 18.

### *III Immediate Help*

1. A Federal law should be enacted providing for immediate emergency help for all workers who have been unemployed two months or more, consisting of eight week's wages for each worker. The average wage received during the last four weeks of employment shall serve as the basis. The costs should be covered by special taxes on high incomes, inheritance, and corporation profits.
2. Immediate enactment of State laws providing for the abolition of the right of eviction by landlords against tenants who are unemployed. Immediate establishment by municipalities of homes to shelter the unemployed. Compulsory repair by the landlords of all working-class homes in bad condition.
3. Establishment of public kitchens by municipalities to provide free meals for all unemployed workers, and their families. It is inadvisable to establish such unemployment kitchens at the present time.
4. Municipal provisions for supplying free medical treatment, medicine, and hospital care to all unemployed.
5. Immediate utilization of schools as feeding centers for children of unemployed workers, whether of school age or below it. These stations should be under labor-parent control. Free clothing and free medical treatment by the schools for the children of the unemployed.

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*IV Public Works*

1. The immediate development of Federal, State and Municipal schemes of employment to absorb the unemployed in their own trades at trade-union wages, hours and conditions.
2. The Federal, State, and City governments should devise schemes for: improving the roads and bridges of the country; improving the rivers, canals, docks, and harbors; setting up electric power supply stations; forestation, land drainage, and land reclamation; extension and electrification of railways. On all public works, trade-union wages, hours and conditions must be guaranteed by law.
3. Immediate recognition of the Soviet Government. Stimulation of trade with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by the granting of sufficient credits by the Federal Government as a means of absorbing the unemployed.

*V Organize the Unemployed and Unorganized*

1. The direct mass action of the working class against the ruinous effects of capitalist rationalization, speed-up, and unemployment is the basis for all unemployed demands. It is imperative that the Party should set up Councils of Unemployed everywhere. These Councils should secure as broad a mass basis as possible. The unemployed movement must be linked up on a national scale as early as conditions allow. In addition to affiliating trade unions and other labor bodies, the Councils shall enroll the unemployed workers as individual members and shall issue membership books and establish a nominal dues system.
2. It is vital to secure the joint action of the trade unions and unemployed workers, as well as the organized and unorganized workers. The trade unions must set up everywhere Unemployed Committees, and must initiate without delay organizational drives on a large scale, admitting all workers without initiation fee.
3. The trade unions shall take measures for retaining their members during periods of unemployment. The trade unions shall recognize the membership cards of the Unemployed Councils for the purpose of transfer without initiation fee, when such workers obtain employment.
4. The treachery of the labor bureaucracy, the general crisis in the labor movement, and the pressure of unemployment makes the organization of the unorganized imperative. The Unemployed Councils, as well as the T. U. E. L. organizations,

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should take the initiative in organizational drives.

5. Relentless struggle must be conducted against the infamous system of injunctions and against all laws which hinder or prohibit the organization of the workers. The struggle for freedom to strike, organize, and picket, for free speech, press, and assemblage for the working class, must be increased and intensified.
6. Immediate abolition of all vagrancy laws. Protection of unemployed workers from arrest under charges of vagrancy.

*VI Unemployment and Capitalism*

1. **We must always emphasize that neither unemployment insurance nor public works nor shortening of the working day can abolish unemployment. There is no cure for unemployment in a capitalist society. Unmployment is inseparable from capitalism. The constant industrial reserve army of jobless is growing and is one of the most important props of capitalist wage slavery.**
2. Unemployment can be permanently abolished only in a Communist society which must be based not on profit but on labor. The first steps towards a Communist society are:
   a. Independent political action of the working-class; every union shall affiliate to the Labor Party; every individual worker should join the Workers (Communist) Party.
   b. Organize the unorganized.
   c. The proletarian revolution; a Workers' and Farmers' Government; the expropriation of the capitalists; the nationalization of all industries and land; and workers' control.

*VII Our Methods of Agitation and Propaganda*

1. The main emphasis must be laid on the organization of the masses.
2. The work of the Unemployed Councils must be strengthened, additional party forces assigned to this work. The contradictions between the various slogans and demands of the various districts must be eliminated. Our propaganda and agitation must be unified and based on the above demands.
3. **In our agitation and propaganda, the relative value and effectiveness of all immediate and partial demands must be pointed out clearly, as well as the basic causes of unemployment and the need of revolutionary struggle against capitalism.**

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# Literature and Economics

*By* V. F. CALVERTON

## LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PROLETARIAN TREND

TOWARD the latter part of the nineteenth century, the proletarian trend began to crystallize, and a distinct anti-bourgeois literature sprang into creation.

The movement of the proletariat was beginning to shake the very basis of bourgeois society. From the impact of these conflicting classes a mental as well as social upheaval was being fomented. The serenity of the earlier bourgeois order was destroyed bit by bit by the very forces which had once given it the delusion of permanence. A social background for revolt was maturing with ominous rapidity. In 1869 forty-five new unions were established, and in 1890, seventy-two more were organized. As early as 1880 the *Times*, in its account of the labor trouble in Lancashire, declared that the basis of the agitation was "a struggle for mastery." In the same year, prior to the great developments a decade later, the Trade Union Congress represented over 600,000 workers who were joining efforts with the Cooperative Societies in the kingdom. In 1881 the Social-Democratic Federation had been formed in London. In 1884 the reformistic Social Settlement Movement arose with the formation of Toynbee Hall in 1884. "There is no longer, among the mass of the working class in London, any decided hostility to socialism," wrote William Morris at the time. In 1893 the Independent Labor Party was founded after the earlier one in 1888, and Kier Hardie was elected the first President. A decade before, too, the Trade Unions had joined with the International Congress of workingmen's organizations. 1887 had seen the famous Bloody Sunday with the fight in Trafalgar Square between the unemployed and the police and Foot Guards. In the year following, the *Star*, the first newspaper to give labor expression in the press, was founded. Bernard Shaw was its musical critic, Walkley its dramatic critic, John Davidson and later Richard le Gallienne its literary critics. In 1890 a successful coal-mining strike lasting four days drew the following comment from the *Times*:

> "Twenty or even thirty years ago it would have been out of the question for 300,000 workmen to combine so perfectly as to stop work at one given moment and to resume it at another."



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The revolt of the esthetes in the eighteen-nineties was essentially the reflection of a social situation that had grown so intolerable that it could no longer retain its adherents. It was an expression of social discontent which spent its energies in forms idiosyncratic and pyrotechnical that were consecrated to the task of demolishing the bourgeoisie. The Victorian intellectuals, the professional apologists for capitalism, were loathed. William Morris described the reaction toward them in these vivid words:

> "The crowd of useless, draggle-tailed knaves and fools who, under the pretentious title of the intellectual part of the middle classes, have in their turn taken the place of the medieval jester."

In drama and novel, caricature and poem, the bourgeoisie was satirized and pricked. In his attacks upon the bourgeoisie, Aubrey Beardsley bared the rotting breasts of a bloated civilization. In *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, Wilde revealed, with a soulful if sentimental nebulousness, the social character of the revolt. For the nonce, art and socialism were united.

But however definitely social in origin, the 1890's took on no definitely political character. Morbid individualism prevailed despite the allurement of social utopias. There was scarcely any keen kinship between the homo-sexual Wilde and the labor movement. Yet the labor movement indirectly affected Wilde and his whole school. *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* was one effect; the bitter contempt for the bourgeoisie, in a more subtle way, was another.

"Hatred of the bourgeoisie is the beginning of virtue," Flaubert exclaimed, and in this exclamation is captured the social and esthetic character of the period of the 1890's in England. It is this characteristic which marks the period as socially distinct. It is this element which gave social motivation to its insurrectionary forms and materials.

With the twentieth century the proletarian trend has become more pronounced and significant. In Russia the proletarian trend has developed into a proletarian art. Proletarian art becomes a besieging theme for discussion. Russian magazines print controversies on the topic. Trotsky, Bukharin, Lunacharsky, Bogdanov, Vronsky and others write about it in voluminous and illuminating detail. A trend is thus turned into a movement.

In other parts of the world, also, the progress of the proletarian trend has not slackened.

Collectivization of production was slowly transforming the old individualism into socialized co-operation.

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In 1864, in the famous preface to their novel *Germinie Lacerteux*, the Goncourts wrote:

> "Living in the nineteenth century, at a time of universal suffrage, and democracy, and liberalism, we asked ourselves whether what are called the 'lower orders' had no claim upon the Novel; whether the people—this world beneath a world—were to remain under the literary ban and disdain of authors who have hitherto maintained silence regarding any soul and heart that they might possess. We asked ourselves whether, in these days of equality, there were still for writer and reader unworthy classes, misfortunes that were too low, dramas too foul-mouthed, catastrophes too base in their terror. We became curious to know whether Tragedy, that conventional form of a forgotten literature and a vanished Society, was finally dead; whether, in a country devoid of caste and legal aristocracy, the miseries of the lowly and the poor would speak to interest, to emotion, to piety, as loudly as the miseries of the great and rich; whether, in a word, the tears that are wept below could provoke weeping like those that are wept above."

Their novel was revolutionary in the sense that it has as its tragic protagonist a servant girl—in other words, not a bourgeois or an aristocrat. Since the appearance of *Germinie Lacerteux*, French literature, with its Rolland and Barbusse, has developed an important radical school.

In Germany, the work of Ernst Toller, Kaiser, Hasenclever and others has converted the protests of a proletarian trend into the dynamics of a revolutionary art. The early nineteenth century had been torn with strife. The introduction of machinery had ruined the weavers and spread discontent and disaster over the land. In the poetry of Pfau, Weerth, and Dronke the fury of revolt raged. Dronke's famous lines giving voice to the threat of the weaver:

> "And for your blood of God demand
> Grim penalty,"

vibrate with a passion that is real and vigorous. Pfau's lines:

> "O could I weave but curse on curse
> In which the whole wide world to immerse"

or those of Heine:

> "A curse to the king, and a curse to his coffin,
> The rich man's king whom our plight could not soften:
> Who took our last penny by taxes and cheats,
> And let us be shot like dogs in the streets.
> We weave, we are weaving,"

are even more decisive in their utterance. From this early proletarian trend grew Hauptmann's drama *The Weavers*, Pretzang's *Daughters of Labor*, and Toller's *Machine Wreckers* and *Masses and Men*.

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In England, the proletarian motif of Kingsley and Gaskell attained a point of dramatic perfection in Galsworthy's excellent play *Strife*. In a newly organized socialist theatre, the proletarian trend in English literature is being cultivated and nursed. In America, developments have been rapid though not profound. A proletarian trend, deriving its first pulsations from the poetry of Whitman and the prose of Bellamy and Norris, has today grown in dimensions if not in intensity. Sherwood Anderson in *Marching Men* gave clear, ringing utterance to the cause of the proletariat. Upton Sinclair in *The Jungle*, 100%, *Singing Jailbirds* and other works has given it more defiant if less finished expression. Plays, like Lawson's *Processional*, Gain's *Crashing the Gates*, Pinski's *Isaac Pinievy*, however unaffiliated with a proletarian program, all fall within the same category.

They all illustrate the influence of the social struggle upon the trend and substance of art.

In America another phase of this movement has evolved—a phase akin to those in other countries and yet in a way different. At Brookwood Labor College, under the direction of Miss Hazel MacKaye, work in proletarian drama has been carried on with intensive interest and enthusiasm. The workers are taught to find in the drama a vehicle for the expression of their ideas and emotions. Proletarian dramas have been conceived by the workers, written by the workers, and acted by the workers. One of the most interesting of the plays staged at Brookwood was a drama by Bonchi Friedman, entitled *Miners*. This is another phase in the history of the new drama. The future of the movement is even more signal. The aim is to create a Workers' Theatre movement. Like the Little Theatre movement which swept over the western world in the last two decades, the Workers' Theatre idea will endeavor to grow and expand into a movement. In Germany this expansion has already occurred. The Workers' Theatre movement is already an institution. The recent revolt of Piscator from the older workers' group is another advance in this revolutionizing of the German Workers' Theatre.

In this way labor and literature are becoming intimate. In this way labor is affecting literature, changing literature, creating literature.

Out of the social struggles new societies are born, and out of the new societies come new philosophies and new literatures. And new literatures can but reflect the new conditions and the new ideals.

THE END

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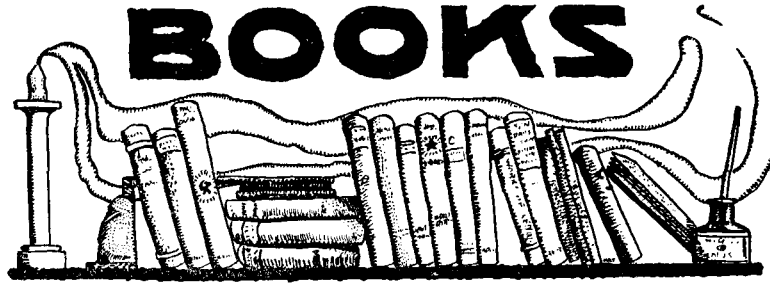


## THE GREAT FORERUNNER OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

*THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL. By G. M. Steklov. International Publishers, New York City.* $3.50.

REVIEWED BY ALEXANDER BITTELMAN

It is well to be reminded that a thorough understanding of the labor movement of the present period is impossible without a knowledge of the period covered by the history and development of the famous First International.

A study of the book by Steklov brings forth the First International as the great forerunner not only of the first, Marxian period, of the Second International, but also as the great forerunner of the Communist International. And the factor which binds these movements together and gives them their revolutionary continuity is in the first instance the revolutionary ideology of Marxism.

The International Publishers certainly deserve credit for turning out into English this splendid book by Steklov, written originally in Russian. The translation by Eden and Cedar Paul is very good indeed, and by having made this book available for the American labor movement, a great step forward has been taken to internationalize the state of mind of the progressive workers of America and to radicalize their point of view and activities generally.

The International Workingmen's Association, which was in later years designated as the First International, was launched in 1864 under the direct ideological and organizational leadership of Marx and Engels. The influence of these two great leaders of the working class was felt throughout the development of the First International. It is therefore important to know the approach of Marx and Engels to the role of this organization, the first well-organized world alliance of the proletarian movement. In the minds of Marx and Engels, the value of the First International was primarily but rather in the fact that the workers of all countries were being united into one international body for carrying on the common struggles on a world scale, as well as for assisting the struggles of the workers in individual countries by the common power of all.

In the preface to the Communist Manifesto, Engels discusses this question in the following way. He says that the International Work-



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ingmen's Association could not at once proclaim the principles which were laid down in the Communist Manifesto for the reason that the labor movement as a whole of the period following the revolutions of 1848, was not mature enough for acceptance of the full program of the Communist Manifesto. Consequently, Marx and Engels were striving to formulate for the First International a system of principles and tactics which on the one hand would be acceptable to the more militant and progressive elements of the movement as a whole, and on the other hand would open up the possibility for actual struggles of the world labor movement in the process of which the workers would reach a higher understanding of their historic task as well as of the means of its accomplishment.

## MARX'S PURPOSE ACCOMPLISHED

A study of Steklov's book clearly demonstrates that Marx and Engels were right in approaching the matter from the angle that they did. By the time the First International was beginning to decline, and eventually dissolved, the working class of the world was much riper for carrying on an organized class-struggle against capitalism in the Marxian sense of the word, and the ideological basis was prepared for the emergence of a higher state of proletarian international movement which eventually became crystallized in the Second International.

The history of the First International is rich with great proletarian struggles on the economic and political fields. It is organically connected with the rise of trade unionism on the continent of Europe, with the first steps of the European working class on the field of independent working-class political action, and with such historic proletarian struggles as the Paris Commune. Consequently, the book under review constitutes a valuable guide to the experience of the working class in the pre-imperialist era of capitalism. A study of this era is absolutely essential for an understanding of the role and tasks of the Communist International which is a product of and one of the most important revolutionary factors in the imperialist era of capitalism.

## IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLES

The internal struggles in the First International are also of great importance. The First International was based upon the following chief factors: British trade unionism, Marxian revolutionary theory, European pre-Marxian Socialist workers groupings, and Anarchism. The history of the First International is a struggle of the Marxian ideology in the First International over the petty-bourgeois anarchistic elements represented by the followers of Bakhunin and Proudhon and over the narrow craft ideology of British trade unionism. The successful struggles of Marx, Engels and their followers in the First International for the establishment of the working-class revolutionary ideology in the world labor movement, has become an organic part of the ideology of the working class as represented by Leninism and Communist International.

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The book under review has one serious shortcoming. It devotes comparatively little space to that phase in the development of the First International, its last phase, which occurred in the United States and is connected with the labor movement of America of that period. As we understand, the author of the book was not in a position to make use of the very rich sources of material dealing with that period. A subsequent edition of the book by the author would do well to make use of that material in order to complete the history of the First International.

The role of the Anarchists in the First International is dealt with very thoroughly by Steklov, which is an important contribution to the subject. There is still too little knowledge of the struggles between Anarchism and Marxism in the First International among even advanced sections of the working class.

Every active worker in the labor movement must study this book by Steklov. No effective and intelligent services can be rendered nowadays to the proletarian class struggles and the labor movement without knowledge and understanding of the great period of working-class struggles led by the First International.

*THE PEASANTRY AND THE REVOLUTION. By N. L. Mecheriakov. Farmers and Peasants International, Moscow. (Can be secured thru Workers Library Publishers, New York.)*

THE PEASANTRY AND THE REVOLUTION By N. L. Mecheriakov is the first of a series of brochures issued by the Farmers and Peasants International under the general title of "Library of the Revolutionary Farmers and Peasants Movement" and edited by Dombal and N. L. Mecheriakov.

The development of the peasant movement since the war has been phenomenal, and the peasantry represent a powerful ally for the proletariat in its struggle. Nevertheless, there is practically no literature in existence dealing with the modern developments of the peasant movement. The aim of the present series is to fill this regrettable gap. The series will comprise approximately fifteen pamphlets, each dealing with the history, both past and present, of the revolutionary peasant movement in a particular country. In the case of the smaller countries, two or three will be dealt with in the space of one pamphlet.

The present brochure written by comrade Mecheriakov represents the introduction to the series. It deals with the various stages of the peasant struggle throughout history, with the teachings of Marx and Engels and later, with the teachings of Lenin upon the role of the peasantry in the social revolution. A survey of the modern peasant movement and a statement of the Farmers and Peasants International concludes the pamphlet.

Within a space of less than seventy pages the author contrives to compress a mass of informative material concerning the peasant movement which deserves to be more widely known. It should be of the greatest value to all workers desirious of obtaining a firm grasp of the peasant movement in the past and its significance for the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat to-day.

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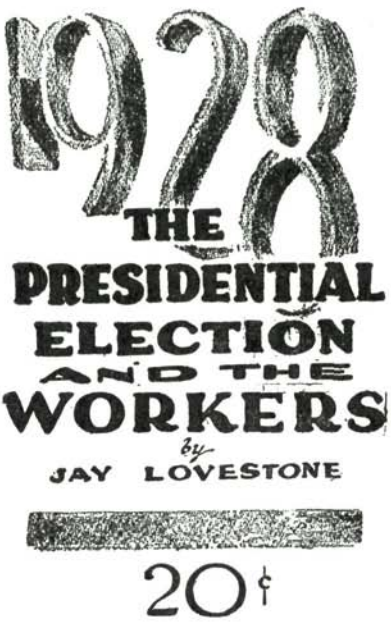



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